CHINA.

RETURN to an Order of the Honourable The House of Commons, dated 14 February 1860;—*for*,

COPIES "of LETTER from the Secretary to the Admiralty, No. 336, dated the 9th day of August 1858, respecting Affairs in *China*, enclosing LETTER from the Foreign Office, dated the 16th day of July 1858, enclosing LETTER from the Earl of *Elgin* and *Kincardine* to the Earl of *Clarendon*, No. 91, dated Her Majesty's Ships "Furious," Gulf of Pechele, the 23d day of April 1858:"

"Of LETTER from the Earl of *Elgin* and *Kincardine*, No. 101, dated Her Majesty's Ship "Furious," Gulf of Pechele, the 29th day of April 1858, to the Earl of *Clarendon*:"

"Of LETTER from Sir *Michael Seymour*, acknowledging receipt of same, No. 326, dated Her Majesty's Ship "Calcutta," Hong Kong, the 27th day of September 1858, with its Enclosures, viz., LETTER from the Earl of *Elgin* and *Kincardine* to Sir *Michael Seymour*, dated Her Majesty's Ship "Furious," the 21st day of May 1858, and LETTER from the Earl of *Elgin* and *Kincardine*, dated Tiensin, the 6th day of July 1858:"

"And, of LETTERS from the Secretary to the Admiralty to Sir *Michael Seymour*, No. 542, dated the 23d day of November 1858, and from the Secretary to the Admiralty, to *E. Hammond*, Esq., dated Admiralty, the 23d day of November 1858."

Admiralty, 20 February 1860.

C. H. PENNELL, Chief Clerk.

(Sir Michael Seymour.)

Ordered, by The House of Commons, *to be Printed*, 21 *February* 1860.

CORRESPONDENCE RESPECTING AFFAIRS IN CHINA.

(No. 336.)

Sir, Admiralty, 9 August 1858.

I AM commanded by my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to send you herewith a copy of a letter, dated the 16th July, from the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and copies of Despatches therein contained from the Earl of Elgin, dated 23d and 29th of April last. In transmitting these documents to you, my Lords entertain no doubt that you will consider it due to your own character to furnish them with such explanations upon the statements therein made as the circumstances require.

I am, &c.
(signed) *W. G. Romaine.*

Rear Admiral, Sir M. Seymour, K.C.B.
&c. &c. &c.
East Indies.

Sir, Foreign Office, 16 July 1858.

I AM directed by the Earl of Malmesbury to transmit to you, to be laid before the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, the accompanying copies of Despatches (Nos. 91 and 101) from the Earl of Elgin reporting the inconvenience which had been occasioned by the failure of Rear Admiral Sir M. Seymour to carry out the arrangements which had been made to ensure the presence of a fleet of gun-boats off the Peiho to support the demands made by his Excellency on the Chinese Government; and I am to request that you will move their Lordships to furnish Lord Malmesbury with any explanation of his proceedings in this matter which has been received from Sir M. Seymour.

I am, &c.
(signed) *E. Hammond.*

The Secretary to the Admiralty,
&c. &c. &c.

(No. 91.)

H.M.S. "Furious,"
My Lord, Gulf of Pechele, 23 April 1858.

IN a Despatch which I did myself the honour to address to your Lordship from Hong Kong on the 14th of November last, and which is No. 61, the following paragraph occurs: "As it is, Count Pontiatine was very decided in "the expression of his opinion, that nothing would be done with the Chinese "Government unless pressure were brought to bear at Peking itself, and that "the use of vessels drawing so little water that they could navigate the Peiho, "would be the best means of making such pressure effective. The Mandarins "on the spot, if I rightly understood him, had in conversation with him ad- "verted with exultation to the fact that our ships of war could not perform "this feat; I told him that we were pretty strong in craft of the description "to which he referred; that we had, as he no doubt knew, a quarrel of our own "to settle in this neighbourhood, but that when this affair was concluded, we "should be prepared to go northwards in force, and very glad to be accom- "panied by the flags of other nations, interested with us in extending com- "mercial relations with China, and inducing the Court of Peking to abate its "absurd pretensions to superiority;" and your Lordship is pleased in your Despatch to me, No. 2, of the 4th of January last, to state that "Her Majesty's "Government approve the language, which, as reported in your coufidential "Despatch, No. 61, of the 14th of November last, you held to Admiral Pontiatine "on the occasion of his visit to your Excellency."

I refer to this correspondence because I am desirous to remind your Lordship of the fact, that from a period now remote, the policy sketched in the paragraph which I have quoted has engaged my attention.

It

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It is true that as a measure of conciliation, and more especially with the view of giving to the non-belligerent powers, who were acting the part of lookers on, and whose hand being not with us, might have chanced at any time to turn against us, a fair pretext for joining us, I proposed to Baron Gros in the memorandum to his Excellency, of which I enclosed a copy to your Lordship in my Despatch, No. 18, of the 26th of January, that we should offer to meet at Shanghai a Plenipotentiary duly accredited by the Emperor of China, for the purpose of settling at that place all differences pending between China and our respective countries. That I did not however, even at that moment, lose sight of the probability that a move in force to some point further north might still be necessary, is apparent from the fact that in the very memorandum to which I am referring, I stated that in communicating to the Prime Minister of the Emperor of China the proposal which I was submitting for the consideration of Baron Gros, it was my intention to add,

"That if before [ ], no such Plenipotentiary presented himself, or "if, when he presented himself, it were found that his rank or his powers were "insufficient, the British Plenipotentiary would then proceed to Tientsin, and "adopt such other measures for enforcing the just demands of his Government "on that of China as circumstances might render necessary."

On the 2d of March, the eve of my departure from Hong Kong for the north, I addressed accordingly to Sir M. Seymour the following letter, of which a copy was forwarded in my Despatch to your Lordship, No. 56, of that date:—

"I have already apprised your Lordship that I am about to proceed to "Shanghai in the hope of meeting there a Plenipotentiary empowered by the "Emperor of China to settle existing differences between Great Britain and "China, and to place the commercial relations of the two countries on an im-"proved footing.

"If I should be disappointed in this hope, it may be necessary, in pursuance "of the policy prescribed by Her Majesty's Government, to bring pressure to bear "at some point near the capital. With a view to this contingency, I think that "it would be advisable that your Excellency should collect at Shanghai, towards "the end of March, or as soon after as may be convenient, as large a fleet, "more especially of gun-boats drawing little water, as you can spare from ser-"vice elsewhere."

In his answer, of which a copy was enclosed in my Despatch, No. 57, of 6th March, the Admiral states: "In reply, I beg to acquaint your Excellency "that for some time past my attention has been directed to this object. One "of the gun-boats and one gun-vessel have already sailed for Shanghai, and "arrangements are in progress for others to follow. It is my intention to sail "for Shanghai in the 'Calcutta,' should nothing prevent, on or about the 16th "instant."

As ever since I arrived in China I have been in constant and unreserved communication with Sir Michael Seymour, and as he was perfectly aware both of the tenor of my note to the Court of Peking; of the term fixed in it, beyond which I had resolved not to await the arrival of a Plenipotentiary from the Emperor of China at Shanghai, and of the importance which I attached to our being able, in the event of failure in the attempt, to negotiate at that place, to appear off the mouth of the Peiho with a formidable fleet of gun-boats, drawing little water, at as early a period as possible after such failure; I confess that I addressed to him the letter above quoted, rather *ex abundante cautelâ*, and with a view to put matters in a proper official shape, than for any practical purpose; and his answer implied that he considered it in some degree supererogatory. Indeed, I may observe in proof of the accuracy of this assertion, that I qualified my request that his fleet should be at Shanghai at the end of March by the phrase, "or as soon after as convenient," only because on the morning of the day on which my letter to him was written, he had informed me that it would not be convenient for him to leave Hong Kong before the 15th of March, and that therefore I must not expect him to be in readiness to move with his force from Shanghai to the north before the end of the first week in April.

Such being the position of affairs, and such the nature of my understanding with Sir Michael Seymour, your Lordship will no doubt have learnt without surprise, that when on my arrival at Shanghai I found that the Government of Peking had refused to send a Plenipotentiary to meet me there, and had

communicated that refusal in a manner which was eminently significant of its determination to prevent all direct intercourse between foreign functionaries and the Supreme Government of the empire, I at once determined to bring pressure to bear at some point near to the capital; my conviction being that nothing was at that time necessary to make such pressure effective, at least to the extent of inducing the Government of Peking to appoint a negotiator to treat with me, except the presence within the bar of the Peiho of a small number of foreign vessels of war, qualified by their light draught of water to navigate that river. As I had stated to Count Pontiatine in November last, I knew that we were strong in vessels of this description, and I considered the Admiral's letter to me of the 2d of March to be a positive pledge that they would be forthcoming in the neighbourhood of Shanghai at or about the end of March.

I accordingly addressed to their Excellencies Baron Gros, Count Pontiatine, and Mr. Reed communications, of which copies were enclosed in my Despatch to your Lordship, No. 72, of the 1st of April.

On the 3d of April, however, two days after the Despatch of the communications in question, the "Coromandel," tender to the flag ship, arrived at Shanghai, conveying the very perplexing intelligence, that not only had Sir M. Seymour put off his own departure from Hong Kong from the 16th, the date mentioned in his letter of the 2d of March to me, to the 25th ultimo, but that no preparations for the immediate despatch of gun-boats to the north seemed to be in progress at the time of her sailing. I gathered this information from the verbal reports of the officers of the ship, for on neither point did I hear from Sir M. Seymour.

I had then to consider whether in the altered position in which I found myself it would be my duty, first, to adhere to the plan of proceeding, which I had already communicated to the representatives of the Great Powers who are at this conjuncture acting with us in Chinese affairs; secondly, to await the arrival of Sir M. Seymour at the risk of losing both the healthy season and the grain junks; or thirdly, to abandon altogether the plan of a movement towards the north. After duly weighing these several alternatives I arrived at the conclusion that I ought to rally round me all the force I could collect and proceed without delay to the mouth of the Peiho, for the reasons stated in my Despatch to your Lordship, No. 78, of the 3d instant.

I have now to report that in pursuance of this determination, having addressed to the senior officers at Shanghai and Hong Kong the letters, of which copies were sent to your Lordship in the Despatch last referred to, I left Shanghai for the north on the morning of the 10th instant, taking with me in tow the "Slaney," the only gun-boat on the station; and that I reached my present anchorage in the Gulf of Pechelee, at a distance of about five miles from the bar of the Peiho River on the 14th instant. Since my arrival Captain Osborn, with the assistance of the very zealous and intelligent master of the "Furious," Mr. Court, has been diligently engaged in collecting information with respect to the depth of water on the bar, and on other points, which may be useful at some future time. But having with me only two vessels which could cross the bar, the "Slaney" gun-boat, and the "Cormorant" despatch boat, which has been lightened for the purpose, I have of course been precluded from making any movement in advance.

From all that I have heard and observed since I came here, I am confirmed in the opinion that if, on our arrival, we had been in a position to move at once up the river towards Tien-tsin, with a force of from 10 to 12 gun-boats, assigning, as the motive of this proceeding on our part, to any Chinese local officials who might have seen fit to question it, our determination to confer with the Emperor's Government at or near the capital, and apprising them at the same time that, though we intended to do no violence while unprovoked, we were prepared to force our way if any attempt were made to stop us. We should have been able to effect this operation without encountering resistance. By adopting this course we should have furnished to the Chinese Government palpable evidence of the fact that foreign ships of war can ascend the river, which is the highway to the capital, and which has hitherto been considered a sealed channel to them. We should moreover have placed our force between the capital and the junks, which convey to it at this season the customary supplies of grain. I think it probable that such a demonstration, under the conditions above stated, would have sufficed to bring the Imperial Government

to

to terms, and that any necessity for a recourse to further measures of violence or coercion would have been avoided.

The chief credit of this manœuvre, if it had been executed in the manner which I have sketched above, must have accrued to the British navy, because, for every single vessel, competent by draught of water to navigate the Peiho river, which Admiral Regault de Genouilly has at his disposal, Admiral Seymour has at least five.

I have now submitted a plain statement of the course which I have followed, and of the reasons which have determined it; it rests with your Lordship to pass a judgment on both.

I have, &c.
(signed) *Elgin & Kincardine.*

(No. 101.)

Her Majesty's Ship "Furious," Gulf of Pechelee,
My Lord, 29 April 1858.

WITH reference to my Despatch to your Lordship, No. 91, of the 23d instant, I have now the honour to report that Rear Admiral Sir M. Seymour reached this anchorage on the 24th instant, in Her Majesty's Ship "Calcutta." As this vessel draws about 25 feet of water, she cannot approach within several miles of the bar of the Peiho river. Since then his steam tender, the "Coromandel," has arrived, towed by the paddle-wheel steamer, "Sampson," which also cannot cross the bar.

On the afternoon of the 24th, Admiral Seymour called upon me and handed to me the Despatch, of which I herewith transmit a copy. From the memorandum enclosed in it, it appears that exclusively of the "Slaney," which left Hong Kong before I did, five gun-boats of the larger class are under orders for the north, and may be expected, if nothing occurs to delay them, to reach this place during the course of May. I say, if nothing occurs to delay them, because from more recent information, I already know that the "Leven" was detained at Amoy for several days beyond the allotted period, in consequence of some failure in the execution of the orders left to relieve her; and that the "Opossum" and "Bustard," which were to have sailed from Hong Kong on the 10th of this month, had not come down the Canton river on the 12th.

If, on the plea that it could not be spared from the Canton river, Sir Michael Seymour had declined to send to the north the large fleet, "especially of gun-boats," for which I had applied, I should have been compelled, however much I might have dissented from it, to bow to his decision on a professional point, and I should have shaped my course accordingly. If, again, he had told me that it was not "towards the end of March," but "towards the end of May," that his fleet would be available for service in this quarter, I should have made a corresponding change in my arrangements. But, in his letter of the 2d of March, he promised, in the most uncompromising terms, to give me the support for which I had asked, and offered not a syllable of objection to the period which I had specified as that on which I required that the support in question should be forthcoming. It is, therefore, with a degree of surprise which I have difficulty in describing, that I learn from the information which he has now for the first time furnished to me, that his arrangements are so made that the very inadequate force which he is about to supply will not arrive here until the approach of the season when the climate is most unfavourable to the European constitution.

No explanation of the cause of this most grievous disappointment has been given to me, and I do not trust myself to hazard a conjecture on the subject. It is idle to charge the delays which have taken place upon the monsoon, because, where the French gun-boats and the "Slaney" could navigate, it is manifest that other gun-boats of the English squadron might have done the same; moreover, the Admiral has under his orders powerful paddle-wheel steamers, such as the "Fury" and "Sampson," which could have towed to this point a sufficient number of the smaller class of gun-boats if it had been deemed expedient so to employ them; nor can it be alleged that there was any room for doubt as to the policy which the High Commissioners of the Allied Powers

were, in obedience to their instructions, about to pursue, for, independently of the communications, both verbal and written, which I had myself addressed to him on this point, Sir M. Seymour knew before he left Hong Kong—indeed he mentioned this fact to me when he visited me on the 24th instant—that Admiral Rigault had sailed for the north with all the force he could collect, including, with one exception, all the gun-boats under his command. In point of fact, the whole French fleet reached this anchorage on the 25th instant; and, at the moment when I am writing this Despatch the French flag is represented by two gun-boats within the bar of the Peiho, the English by two despatch-boats aground on the top of it.

I much fear that it will be found, when the matter comes to be inquired into, that one of the reasons for the non-appearance of gun-boats here at a time when their presence would be so valuable, is the fact that many of them are unservicable, from the way in which they have been lately worked in the Canton river in the discharge of duties, a large proportion of which might, at any rate since the blockade has been raised, have been as well executed by the ordinary passenger or other merchant carrying craft.

I am satisfied indeed from what I witnessed on the occasion of the capture of Canton, and from what I have since observed in my progress along the coast, that the means at the disposal of the British authorities in these seas, if properly employed, are ample for any objects which Her Majesty's Government may desire to accomplish in China.

I am confident that this truth, if it has escaped the notice of some among ourselves, has at any rate made itself fully apparent to those who are acting with us, or standing by.

In order, however, to the attainment of this end, and more especially to its attainment without an unnecessary expenditure of blood and treasure, it is indispensable that those who control the material force of Great Britain in this quarter should lend to those who direct its diplomacy a vigorous and intelligent support.

I have furnished the foregoing statement, because I think it right that Her Majesty's Government should have the means of judging whether or not this condition is realised in the manner in which the public service of Great Britain is now conducted in China.

For my own part, I shall continue to use my utmost endeavours to carry out the policy which I am commanded by my instructions to pursue.

I have, &c.
(signed) *Elgin & Kincardine.*

The Earl of Clarendon, K.G.,
&c. &c. &c.

(No. 8.)

"Calcutta," in the Gulf of Pecheli,
22 April 1858.

My Lord,

I HAD the honour to receive your Excellency's Despatch of the 8th instant on my arrival off the Rugged Islands on the 13th instant, and lost no time in making arrangements for expediting the presence of ships of war in the Gulf of Pecheli.

The accompanying is a list of ships available for service to the northward. Your Excellency will perceive that a force of 13 vessels may be expected within a few days, though before the setting in of the south-west monsoon adverse weather may retard their movements.

I have expressed to Captain Sir F. Nicolson, of the "Pique," my approval of his having preceded your Lordship with all the available force at his disposal.

I have, &c.
(signed) *M. Seymour,* Rear Admiral,
Commander in Chief.

His Excellency the Earl of Elgin, K.G.,
&c. &c. &c.

SHIPS of War available for Service in the Gulf of *Pecheli.*

"Calcutta," 84 guns; "Pique," 40 guns; "Furious," steam frigate; "Cormorant," 4, steam gun-boat; "Slaney," 3, steam gun-boat.

"Nimrod," 6, steam gun-vessel; "Severn," 3, steam gun-boat. May be hourly expected.

"Sampson,"

"Sampson," 6, steam ship; "Coromandel," 5, steam tender. Should be here about the 28th, with the English mail of 25th February.

"Hesper," steam store ship (full of coals); "Opossum," 2, steam gun-boat; "Bustard," 2, steam gun-boat. Ordered to leave Hong Kong on the 10th April, weather permitting.

"Fury," 6, steam sloop. Left at Shanghae to bring on the English mail of the 9th March.

"Cruizer," 17, steam sloop; "Firm," 2, steam gun-boat; "Staunch," 2, steam gun-boat. May be expected to leave Hong Kong about 24th April.

"Belleisle," hospital ship, with 42 days' provisions for 2,000 men, should leave Hong Kong about 24th April.

"Surprise," 2, steam gun-boat, at Ningpo." Can be sent for if required.

Note.—Her Majesty's steam ships "Retribution" and "Magicienne," on their arrival at Hong Kong from the Pacific, are ordered to join my flag in the Gulf of Pecheli.

Sir, Tientsin, 6 July 1858.

I HAVE much satisfaction in informing your Excellency that the Emperor of China has been pleased to signify his assent to the several articles of the treaty which was signed by me and the Imperial Commissioners on the 26th ult., and which I have already had the honour of reading to you confidentially.

It will not, therefore, be necessary to continue any longer at this point the pressure which has been applied by your Excellency with so much effect and at so small a cost of human life or suffering.

Canton will still continue in the military occupation of the Allies, until certain sums are paid by the authorities of Kwang-Tung, or until the Governments of England and France shall otherwise determine. At an interview which I had with the Imperial Commissioners this morning, I represented to them the importance of putting a stop to the hostile proceedings of the Imperial authorities in that province, and warned them of the serious consequences which would ensue if they were continued.

It is now my intention, in pursuance of my instructions, to proceed to Japan, with the view of negotiating a treaty with the authorities of that empire. As we are at peace with Japan, it is not, of course, my intention to ask your Excellency to have recourse to any measures of hostility in that quarter, but it will probably be conducive to the attainment of the objects which Her Majesty's Government has in view if your Excellency can consistently with a due regard to the other interests under your charge cause me to be accompanied on this mission with a respectable naval force.

I am, &c.

(signed). *Elgin & Kincardine.*

His Excellency
Rear Admiral Sir Michael Seymour, K.C.B.,
&c. &c.

(No. 542.)

Sir, Admiralty, 23 November 1858.

HAVING laid before my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty your letter of 27th September last, No. 326, and its enclosure, in answer to the complaints made in the Earl of Elgin's Despatches of the 23d and 29th April last of your having failed to carry out the arrangements made for collecting a fleet of gun-boats in the Gulf of Pechili at a sufficiently early period, I am commanded by their Lordships to send you herewith, for your information, a copy of a letter which they have this day addressed to Her Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs on this subject.

My Lords desire me to convey to you the expression of their complete satisfaction at your answer to the imputations contained in Lord Elgin's abovementioned Despatch.

I am, &c.

(signed) *H. Corry.*

Rear Admiral
Sir M. Seymour, K.C.B., Hong Kong.

Sir, Admiralty, 23 November 1858.

WITH reference to your letter of the 16th July last, and the Despatches therein enclosed from the Earl of Elgin, dated the 23d and 29th of April, reporting the inconvenience occasioned by the alleged failure of Rear Admiral Sir M. Seymour to carry out arrangements made to ensure the presence of a fleet of gun-boats off the Peiho, to support the demands made by his Excellency on the Chinese Government, I am commanded by my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to send you herewith, for the information of the Earl of Malmesbury, a copy of a letter from Rear Admiral Sir M. Seymour, dated the 27th September last, No. 326, and copy of its enclosure, in answer to the charges brought against him by Lord Elgin.

This answer has been fully considered by their Lordships, and they think it due to the high character and the long and distinguished services of Sir M. Seymour, to state their opinion that such answer to the charges and imputations of Lord Elgin is complete and satisfactory.

My Lords desire me to add the expression of the conviction, that if Lord Elgin had communicated with Sir M. Seymour on the subject of these charges, as would have been the most just and usual course under such circumstances before they were sent to England, his Lordship must have been satisfied that there was no sufficient ground for the complaints which he has made.

I am, &c.

E. Hammond, Esq., Foreign Office. (signed) *H. Corry.*

(No. 326.)

REPLY to the Earl of *Elgin's* Complaints.

Sir, "Calcutta," at Hong Kong, 27 September 1858.

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, No. 363, of the 9th August last, (M.), enclosing a copy of a Despatch of the 16th July from the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, with copies of two Despatches from the Earl of Elgin, dated the 23d and 29th April last, and informing me that the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty entertain no doubt that I shall consider it due to my character to furnish their Lordships with such explanations upon the statements therein made as the circumstances may require.

2. In reply, I have the honour to state that I have perused with care and attention Lord Elgin's Despatches, which I regret to observe charge me with a failure in collecting in the Gulf of Pechili a naval squadron, including vessels of light draft, at a sufficiently early period to meet his Lord's expectation and intentions. As these Despatches embrace a variety of charges, including an improper performance of my duties as the Commander in Chief on this station in the employment of the gun-boats in the Canton River, I propose to answer them in succession.

Lord *Elgin's* Despatch of the 23d April.

LORD ELGIN first refers to a conversation he held with Count Pontiatine in November last, in order to show that from a period now remote, the policy sketched in the paragraph quoted had engaged his Lordship's attention.

3. Their Lordships will doubtless have considered that the subject of this conversation, embracing the services and co-operation of the ships under my command, was known to me at the time, but it was only on my arrival in the Gulf of Pechili, on the 24th April, that his Lordship first mentioned it to me, until which time I had no knowledge of it whatever. His Lordship informed me then that he had reported it to the Earl of Clarendon.

His Lordship goes on to state, that on the 2d March, he addressed me a letter, stating that it would be advisable, I "should collect at Shanghae, "towards the end of March, or as soon after as might be convenient, as "large a fleet, more especially of gun-boats drawing little water, as I could "spare from service elsewhere," and that I had replied that my attention had been for some time past directed to that object; that one gun-boat and one

one gun-vessel had already sailed for Shanghae; that arrangements were in progress for others to follow, and that it was my intention to sail for Shanghae in the "Calcutta," should nothing prevent me, on the 16th March.

4. By reference to the disposition sheet of the squadron, dated the 15th March, their Lordships will at once perceive, that at that date the following vessels had sailed from Hong Kong for Shanghae: "Highflyer," "Slaney," "Cormorant," "Nimrod," and "Surprise;" that the "Sampson," "Coromandel," and "Leven," were preparing to sail, and did sail a few days after; and that the "Opossum," "Staunch," and "Bustard," were to sail when the monsoon abated. These vessels I ordered to be convoyed by the "Hesper," steam store ship, that they might be supplied by her with the necessary coals, to hasten their voyage. I left orders with Commodore Stewart to dispatch the smaller gun-boats on the 10th April, that being, as I considered, from experience, the earliest convenient time at which they could proceed, to allow them to reach Shanghae in an efficient state for service, and I gave orders for two more gun-boats to be kept ready if sent for, as stated in the disposition sheet. I should have left on the 18th March, in the "Calcutta," but I was detained till the 25th, on account of a succession of heavy gales peculiar to the season. I sailed on the 25th, in tow of the "Niger," but I found the N. E. monsoon still so strong, that on the third day I proceeded under sail. The French admiral left Hong Kong the day after I did.

His Lordship next stated, that "ever since I have arrived in China, I "have been in constant and unreserved communication with Sir Michael "Seymour, and as he was perfectly aware both of the tenor of my route "to the Court of Pekin, of the time fixed in it, beyond which, I had "resolved not to wait the arrival of Plenipotentiaries from the Emperor of "China at Shanghae, and of the importance which I attached to our being "able, in the event of failure in the attempt to negotiate at that place, to "appear off the mouth of the Peiho." His Lordship confesses that he addressed to me the letter of the 2d March, more with a view to put matters in a proper official shape, than for any practical purposes.

5. Up to the date of the capture of Canton I am quite willing to allow that Lord Elgin was in constant and unreserved communication with me, but this has not been the case subsequently. The extent of my knowledge of his Lordship's Despatch to the Court of Pekin is embodied in my letter to you (No. 68) of the 14th February, and to the mere fact that his Lordship had asked for plenipotentiaries to meet him at Shanghae, but I must plead entire ignorance of any date beyond which his Lordship had determined not to negotiate at Shanghae, or of his Lordship's intended ulterior proceedings, beyond bringing pressure to bear on some point near the capital, the extent of which, as far as my knowledge went, was to blockade the mouth of the Peiho, and the mouth of the Grand Canal in the Yang-tse-Kiang, as directed by Her Majesty's Government.

Lord Elgin proceeds to recapitulate the before-mentioned reasons, and states that on the 3d April the "Coromandel" arrived at Shanghae, and brought the very perplexing intelligence that not only had Sir M. Seymour put off his own departure from Hong Kong from the 16th to the 25th March, but that no preparations for the immediate dispatch of gunboats to the north seemed to be in progress. This information his Lordship gathered from the verbal reports of the officers of the "Coromandel," for on neither point did his Lordship hear from Sir M. Seymour. His Lordship, under these circumstances, determined to rally round him all the force he could collect, and proceed without delay to the mouth of the Peiho; that his Lordship, therefore, wrote certain letters to the senior officers at Shanghae and Hong Kong, and proceeded to the north on the 10th April, taking with him the "Slaney" in tow of the "Furious," and arrived in the Gulf of Pechili on the 14th. That having only the "Cormorant" and "Slaney," he had been precluded from making any movement in advance; and that from all he had observed and heard, his Lordship was confirmed in the opinion that if on our arrival we had been in a position to move at once up the river towards Tientsin, we should have been able to do so without resistance, convinced the Chinese that foreign ships of war can ascend the river, and have placed our force between the capital and the junks

conveying supplies of grain, which would have sufficed to bring the Imperial Government to terms; and that any further measures of violence or coercion would have been avoided. His Lordship concludes this Despatch by stating that the chief credit of this measure must have accrued to the British Navy.

6. On the 23d March I despatched the "Leven" and "Coromandel" to Amoy and Shanghae; the former to remain at Amoy until relieved by the "Elle," to sail in a few days. As I was to sail two days after the "Coromandel," I did not write to Lord Elgin by that opportunity, though I had written to his Excellency a private letter on the 15th; and to show how little I anticipated any sudden removal from Shanghae, from any information in my possession, I quote the following extract from my letter to you, No. 138, of the 25th of March: "I have "the honour to report that I intend to sail this day, in Her Majesty's ship 'Cal- "cutta,' for the Rugged Islands, the nearest convenient anchorage to Shanghae "with which I shall keep up a communication by means of the 'Coromandel,' steam "tender." On my arrival at the Rugged Islands, on the 13th April, I found the "Sampson" and "Coromandel" waiting for me, with the intelligence that Lord Elgin had with the "Pique," "Furious," "Cormorant," and "Slaney," proceeded to the Gulf of Pechili on the 8th and 10th April. A letter from Lord Elgin announced the same intelligence; and that letter, of which a copy is enclosed in my letter, No. 148, of the 13th April, contained the first intimation I had received from his Lordship of his intention to proceed up the river to the city of Tientsin. Having left Hong Kong under the impression that on my arrival at Shanghae any future naval operations would have been decided on, after due consultation with the naval Commanders-in-chief, I must confess my extreme surprise on learning that Lord Elgin had already left for the Gulf of Pechili; and I may add, that my feelings were fully shared in by Admiral Rigault. Before leaving Hong Kong I had made every inquiry respecting the navigation of the Gulf of Pechili, and had come to the conclusion, which I had hoped to have communicated to Lord Elgin at Shanghae, that the end of April would be sufficiently early for Her Majesty's ships to assemble off the Peiho, to carry on operations with effect, and the fact of the "Calcutta" having carried away her main yard in the still strong north-east wind, while crossing the Gulf on the 23d April, sufficiently proves the correctness of my opinion. Even after the 10th May there were many days during which it was quite impracticable for the gunboats to carry on active operations.

7. On referring to Admiralty letter, No. 151, of the 20th April 1857, it is distinctly stated, in the letter from the Foreign Office, of the 17th April, "that "when negotiations become useless, it then rests with the Admiral to determine "where and how the forces at his disposal shall be employed," and in the memorandum from Lord Panmure which accompanies that letter this sole responsibility is made more manifest. Had Lord Elgin waited my arrival at Shanghae, I should have been able to learn his Excellency's wishes, and to have made the necessary arrangements for carrying out any intended operations; but no later than the 10th April his Lordship, acting on the verbal reports of the subordinate officers of my flag tender, and knowing I must be close at hand (I arrived three days afterwards) proceeded with the small force then at Shanghae to the Gulf of Pechili, and, having arrived there on the 14th, finds, according to his Lordship's own admission, that the force was inadequate for making any movement in advance, so that the only object attained was the placing me in a false position by taking my ships from under my orders, and giving to the Chinese an undue knowledge of our approach.

I most respectfully, and with all deference to the opinion of the Earl of Elgin, beg to submit that there was no urgent necessity for making the communication to the plenipotentiaries of the other powers, upon which his Lordship lays so much stress, until after I had arrived at Shanghae, and that the delay of a few days in commencing a most important operation at the opening of the season, was not of the slightest consequence. His Lordship also mentions how important it would have been to stop the grain junks from entering the Peiho His Lordship had it in his own power to carry such object into effect by application to the senior officer; and I know that the senior French naval officer had orders to carry his Minister's wishes in that respect into effect should it be desirable. One gun-boat inside the bar of the Peiho would have sufficed. Had any casualty happened

happened to the ships which Lord Elgin took into the Gulf of Pechili (and one was very near occurring), or had the "onward movement in advance," which his Lordship seemed to contemplate, without reference to me, on whom the sole responsibility rested, been a failure, it would have been the Admiral, and not Lord Elgin, who would have been held answerable, both to their Lordships and the country at large.

8. With regard to Lord Elgin's last observation, that the whole credit of the measure proposed would have accrued to the British Navy, I have only to remark that the results of the operations which did take place, were highly creditable to the gallant officers and men under my orders. The French Admiral hoisted his flag in an English gun-boat; English gun-boats took the French forces to the attack on the forts; an English gun-boat led the attack; an English vessel received the French wounded; English gun-boats led the way up the Tientsin River, and were the first foreign vessels ever off that city; English gun-boats alone kept up the communication between the city and the fleet outside; and when troops were likely to be required, English gun-boats took on board the whole of the French troops for conveyance up the river. I mention these facts, not with any desire to exaggerate the services of the British gun-boats, in depreciation of the forces under my gallant colleague, whose whole conduct has been marked by frankness and sincerity since the opening of the campaign, and from whom I have invariably received the most cordial support, but to defend the character of the squadron under my orders. Our gun-boats were much smaller than those of the French, and consequently more available in narrow waters. Had the case been reversed, I should have received the same support from Admiral Rigault.

9. I entirely differ in Lord Elgin's opinion, that had we moved up the river immediately on our arrival off the Peiho, without resistance, it would have sufficed to bring the Imperial Government to terms, and that any further measures of violence or coercion would have been avoided. I have had two years' experience in Chinese warfare, and anyone who has been long in China will bear me out in the assertion that nothing but the conclusive evidence of irresistible force will ever fully satisfy the Imperial Government. I consider, therefore, as stated in my Despatch, reporting the operations at the Peiho, that the Chinese having been allowed time to fortify their position, and being confident of their strength, the capture of the forts under such circumstances would have a greater moral effect on the Imperial Government, than if we had attacked them when less prepared. Subsequent events fully bore out my opinion. It was ascertained that guns from Tientsin, and even from Pekin, had been conveyed to the forts at Takoo, and that all the available military force was also assembled there. At one blow, therefore, the whole of their guns were captured, and their army driven like a scattered rabble into the surrounding country, to spread everywhere the reports of our invincibility, and the destructive and terrific missiles we made use of. To this brilliant and complete success I attribute our total exemption from annoyance whilst at Tientsin, and the conclusion of a treaty within a month after, which may be said to open the whole of China to the world, and which may in a few years develope a field for commercial enterprise, of which we have at present no conception.

10. On my arrival off the Rugged Islands, I only remained a sufficient time to send off Despatches to England, and hurried off to the Gulf of Pechili, where I arrived on the 24th April, and found that Lord Elgin had the same morning, before my arrival, sent in his ultimatum to the Chinese Viceroy Tan, who had arrived at Takoo, though, as already remarked, his Lordship had admitted that he had not sufficient force to make any "onward movement in advance."

Lord *Elgin*'s Despatch of the 29th April.

THIS letter commences with reporting the admiral's arrival in the Gulf of Pechili, in the "Calcutta;" but as the ship draws 25 feet water, she cannot approach within several miles of the Peiho River; also the arrival of the "Coromandel," towed by the "Sampson," which also cannot cross the bar. His Lordship, likewise, expresses doubts about the arrival of the gun-boats till the end of May; and remarks on the inadequate nature

of the force I had ordered to the Peiho, and that it would not arrive till the approach of the season when the climate is most unfavourable to the European constitution.

11. Lord Elgin should in candour have added, These ships bring with them a body of 600 trained seamen and marines, six large boats mounting guns, and peculiarly adapted for river service, and a large supply of provisions, stores, clothing, and money for the squadron; and that the "Coromandel," besides her armament of five guns, possesses, in her roomy decks a desirable shelter for troops, and draws only eight feet water. The five gun-boats alluded to arrived ready for service on the 9th and 10th May, in company with the "Hesper," and, with the force already in hand, proved more than sufficient for the service required.

12. So far from the climate being unfavourable to Europeans, there was not one death from sickness in the whole British force in the Peiho, from the 20th May to the 7th July. Indeed, I may say, that, notwithstanding the men were for the first fortnight constantly in boats, there was hardly a case of sickness, as reported in my Despatches. Lord Elgin is in error in stating that I promised a large fleet, especially of gun-boats, to be in the Gulf of Pechili at the end of March. I engaged that an adequate force should be at Shanghae at the end of March, or as soon after as convenient. It is utterly impossible to move a force of gun-boats up a stormy coast with the precision of a railway train; and though his Lordship makes so light of the monsoon, and suggests towing the gun-boats up the coast by paddle steamers, I can assure their Lordships that while the "Calcutta" was making her voyage to the north, the most powerful merchant steamer in China, of 400-horse power, was obliged to bear up within 40 miles of the Yang-tse-kiang, and run back to Foochow, a distance of 200 miles, from stress of weather. My arrangements for getting the gun-boats up to the north, were made with the view to see them arrive in an efficient state, and not torn to pieces by being towed against a head sea, an object I fully accomplished, by causing them to coast the shores, and anchor in bad weather. The "Fury," the fastest steamer under my orders, did tow two gun-boats from Shanghae to the Gulf of Pechili, but there was no advantage gained, as the gun-boats which came up under sail made the passage in the same time. Lord Elgin compares the powerfully-built and full rigged French gun-boats, and the 80-horse power gun-boat "Slaney," with our small ones of 60-horse power. I leave that for their Lordships' decision.

Lord Elgin next states that the French Admiral arrived on the 25th April with his whole fleet, and that at the moment of writing, the French flag was represented by two gun-boats within the bar of the Peiho; the English by two despatch boats aground on the top of it.

13. I might smile at this statement, were it not on account of the motives which appear to dictate it, and the impression it must have made on their Lordships. The "Nimrod" and "Cormorant" had grounded in the previous night in trying to cross the bar in company with three French gun-boats, as did one of the latter (their Lordships must understand that at low water the bar of the Peiho is nearly dry, and it is only at particular times of tide that even a ship's launch can cross). In two hours after his Lordship's Despatch was sent away, both vessels had crossed the bar, and the English flag was represented by three English vessels (including "Slaney") of superior force to the French; the English boats close to the batteries, the French somewhat to the left. I cannot refrain from drawing their Lordships' particular attention to the impression attempted to be made by this complaint, in reality so groundless. The "Cormorant," "Nimrod," and "Surprise," were specially selected by me, as peculiarly qualified for service in the north. They draw only a few inches more water than the French gun-boats; are more capable of resisting bad weather than the smaller vessels; and the "Cormorant," the only one of the three I considered it necessary to take up to Tientsin, was more manageable than the French gun-boats. As Lord Elgin mentions that on the 25th April the whole French fleet arrived, I add a list of the ships of the two flags on the day in question.

English.	*French.*
Calcutta, 84.	Néméses, Frigate.
Pique, Frigate.	Audacieuse, Frigate.
Sampson, Steam Frigate.	Primoquet, Steam Sloop.
Furious, Steam Frigate.	Phlégéton, Steam Sloop.
Nimrod, Cormorant, Slaney, Coromandel, } Gun-vessels.	Fusée, Dragonne, Avalanche, } Gun-boats.

14. On the 29th April, at Lord Elgin's earnest request, but against my own judgment, I despatched the "Sampson" to Hong Kong for two 40 horse-power gun-boats, which, having but one engine, are not desirable vessels to employ at a distance from a factory. Lord Elgin availed himself of this opportunity to forward to England the two Despatches now in question. When these vessels arrived, active operations were concluded, and, from their limited power, proved far inferior in efficiency to the 60 horse-power gun-boats.

> Lord Elgin next adds, that he much fears that it will be found, when the matter comes to be inquired into, that one of the reasons for the non-appearance of gun-boats, when their presence would be so valuable, is, that many of them are unserviceable, from the way in which they were worked in the Canton river, in the discharge of duties which might have been done by merchant steamers.

15. I should decline to take notice of this statement were it not that I desire to give their Lordships the fullest explanation of my conduct. It has excited the astonishment of every one competent to offer an opinion on the subject, that the gun-boats, after so long a voyage as from England, and constant employment in the Canton river, should have remained so long serviceable. Though many of the boats have, as opportunities offered, been docked and refitted, particularly those intended for service in the north, I do not believe that at any one time two gun-boats out of the whole number were unequal to their work.

16. The communication between Canton, after its occupation, and Hong Kong, and the constant conveyance of sick, stores, and provisions could only be carried on with safety and efficiency by armed Government vessels, and the gun-boats offered the readiest and most economical means. A roster of the whole number was therefore made, giving to each her term of service, and also the consequent rest to men and machinery. These boats, in their passage up and down the river, always stopped near the "Furious" for Lord Elgin's commands, and his Lordship had, in addition, a special gun-boat at his own disposal.

> His Lordship next adds, that from what he witnessed at the capture of Canton, and from what he observed in his progress along the coast, the means at the disposal of the British authorities in these seas are ample for any objects which Her Majesty's Government may desire to accomplish in China.

17. In this I quite agree with his Lordship; I never doubted it.

18. On the vague and conjectural character of the concluding paragraph of Lord Elgin's last Despatch I do not consider it incumbent on me to offer comment; but as his Lordship is pleased to observe, that in order to attain the above objects, and more especially to their attainment without an unnecessary expenditure of blood and treasure, it is indispensable that those who control the material force of Great Britain in this quarter should lend to those who direct its diplomacy a vigorous and intelligent support, I have the honour to report that it has been always my object to do so; and I beg to refer to the copy of his Lordship's Despatch of the 6th July, transmitted to you in my letter, No. 229, of the 6th July, in which Lord Elgin acquaints me that it will not be necessary to continue any longer at Tientsin "the pressure which has been applied by your Excellency with so much effect, and at so small a cost of human life and suffering."

I also transmit, for their Lordships' information, a copy of a Despatch of the 21st May, written to me by Lord Elgin after the capture of the forts at the mouth of the Pei-ho.

19. I have endeavoured, as fully as possible, to reply to the charges brought against me, and I am now quite content to leave the whole case in their Lordships' hands. I was in entire ignorance of Lord Elgin's having written these Despatches until the arrival of the last mail. Why his Lordship should have proceeded from Shanghae to the Gulf of Pechili in the haste he did, three days before my arrival, and without any consultation with me as to the nature of the contemplated operations, and whence the urgency for entering into negotiations with the Chinese authorities at the Pei-ho without any communication with those who were to be responsible in the event of negotiations failing, I have never been able to understand, no subsequent circumstances having brought to light the grounds or reasons for such precipitancy. Most fortunately for the success which finally attended the great object of Lord Elgin's presence in the vicinity of Pekin, the coercive measures that became inevitable, and which the posture of affairs demanded, were delayed until the 20th May, thus affording the time, and only a sufficient time, for the imperial authorities to collect their military strength and resources to a degree that excited a confidence on their part so highly favourable to the ultimate estimate of our irresistible power, when in a little more than three hours their boasted defences were overthrown, and ample proof given of the inutility of further resistance. The surest foundation was thus laid for the successful fulfilment of Lord Elgin's mission to China, the accomplishment of which has, through the skill and perseverance of his Lordship, been realised in the highly advantageous treaty with China, which is now known in Europe.

20. I sincerely hope that the apprehensions felt by Lord Elgin in April, were diminished in June and July, when affairs in the north were terminated.

21. Ever since Lord Elgin arrived in China I have endeavoured to conduct myself towards his Lordship with the respect and deference due to Her Majesty's Plenipotentiary, and their Lordships may rest assured that I shall continue the same course.

I have, &c.
(signed) *M. Seymour,*
Rear-Admiral and Commander-in-Chief.

The Secretary of the Admiralty,
London.

Enclosure in No. 326 of 1858.

Sir, H. M. S. "Furious," 21 May 1858.

I HAVE had the honour to receive your very gratifying Despatch, No. 18, of this day's date, and I avail myself of the opportunity to repeat to your Excellency the sincere congratulations which I have already conveyed in a less formal shape on the issue of yesterday's proceedings. On all sides the highest testimony is borne to the admirable conduct of the forces under your command.

It is very satisfactory for me to hear from your Excellency that our loss has been slight; but I learn with great regret that our gallant allies have suffered more severely.

I trust that this success will be attended with the moral effect which you anticipate; and I have only to add, that whenever the necessary preliminaries are completed, I shall be happy to accompany your Excellency up the river.

I have, &c.
(signed) *Elgin & Kincardine.*

His Excellency
Rear-Admiral Sir M. Seymour, K.C.B.,
Commander-in-Chief.

CHINA.

CORRESPONDENCE

RELATIVE TO

AFFAIRS IN CHINA.

(*Sir Michael Seymour.*)

Ordered, by The House of Commons, *to be Printed,*
21 *February* 1860.

94.

Under 3 *oz.*

CORRESPONDENCE

RESPECTING

AFFAIRS IN CHINA.

Presented to the House of Commons by Command of Her Majesty, in pursuance of their Address dated February 16, 1860.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY HARRISON AND SONS.

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"And, from the Earl of Elgin to the Earl of Clarendon, No. 99, dated the 28th day of April, with Inclosures; and No. 100, with Inclosures."

No. 1.

The Earl of Elgin to the Earl of Clarendon.—(*Received July* 15.)

(No. 99.)

My Lord, "*Furious*," *Gulf of Pechelee, April* 28, 1858.

I HAVE the honour to inclose herewith the copy of a letter which I addressed on the 26th instant to Rear-Admiral Sir Michael Seymour, with a copy of his Excellency's reply.

I have, &c.
(Signed) ELGIN AND KINCARDINE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 1.

The Earl of Elgin to Rear-Admiral Sir M. Seymour.

Sir, "*Furious*," *Gulf of Pechelee, April* 26, 1858.

I HAVE the honour to inform you that, in concert with Baron Gros, Count Poutiatine, and Mr. Reed, I addressed, on the morning of Saturday, the 24th instant, before your Excellency's arrival at this anchorage, a communication to the Imperial Government at Pekin, requiring that a Plenipotentiary, duly accredited by the Emperor of China, be sent forthwith to Takoo, to treat with me.

If, before Saturday, the 1st of May, I have not received a satisfactory reply to that letter, a resort to further measures of coercion, in order to bring the Chinese Government to terms, will be unavoidable; and I think it right to apprize you that, in my opinion, it may become necessary with this view to stop the junk trade of the Peiho, to take the forts at its mouth, and to proceed up the river to Tien-tsin.

I have, &c.
(Signed) ELGIN AND KINCARDINE.

Inclosure 2 in No. 1.

Rear-Admiral Sir M. Seymour to the Earl of Elgin.

My Lord, "*Calcutta*," *Gulf of Pechelee, April* 28, 1858.

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your Excellency's despatch of the 26th instant, acquainting me that if, before Saturday, the 1st of May, your Excellency has not received from the Chinese authorities a satisfactory reply to a letter addressed to them on the 24th instant, a resort to further measures of coercion will be unavoidable, and that, in your Excellency's opinion, it may become necessary to stop the junk trade of the Peiho, to take the forts at its mouth, and to proceed up the river to Tien-tsin.

In reply, I have the honour to inform your Lordship that I shall lose no time in communicating with my colleague the French Admiral, with a view to

determine the extent of coercion which can be undertaken with our limited forces.

I have, &c.
(Signed) M. SEYMOUR.

No. 2.

The Earl of Elgin to the Earl of Clarendon.—(Received July 15.)

(No. 100.)

My Lord, "*Furious*," *Gulf of Pechelee, April* 28, 1858.

I HAVE the honour to inclose the copy of a letter which I addressed to-day to Rear-Admiral Sir Michael Seymour.

I have, &c.
(Signed) ELGIN AND KINCARDINE.

Inclosure in No. 2.

The Earl of Elgin to Rear-Admiral Sir M. Seymour.

My dear Admiral Seymour, "*Furious*," *Gulf of Pechelee, April* 28, 1858.

WITH reference to your official letter to me of the 22nd instant, and to mine of the 26th, I would venture to suggest, for your consideration, whether it might not be expedient to send the "Sampson" to Hong Kong, with orders to tow up from thence a couple of gun-boats of the small class, and with such other directions to the Commodore as you may see fit to send by her.

The "Sampson" might, I presume, leave behind her here such men and boats as you might desire to retain, and she might dispatch, by a pilot from Gutzlaff Island, orders to the senior officer at Shanghae to hasten the movements of all vessels of war destined for the North as they arrive at that place.

I have, &c.
(Signed) ELGIN AND KINCARDINE.

No. 3.

The Earl of Elgin to the Earl of Malmesbury.—(Received July 27.)

(No. 103.)

My Lord, "*Furious*," *Gulf of Pechelee, May* 9, 1858.

I HAVE the honour to inclose the translation of a note addressed to me on the 30th ultimo by a Chinese high officer, of the name of Tau, informing me that he had been appointed by the Emperor to meet me, and enter upon negotiations with me. A communication from the same officer, conceived in terms almost identical, had been presented to me two days before; but as Her Majesty's name was placed in it in a lower position than that of the Emperor of China, I refused to receive it. The first letters sent by Tau to Baron Gros and Mr. Reed being drawn up so as to violate the principle of equality in a like manner, their Excellencies adopted the same course as I had done, and returned them to the writer. This silly attempt to pass an affront, and the promptitude with which, when detected, it was remedied, the blame being cast on a subordinate, are eminently Chinese.

It appeared both to Baron Gros and myself that it was our duty, before entering into negotiations with Tau, to endeavour to ascertain what he held, and whether, in point of fact, he held anything, either in the nature of powers or instructions; whether, in short, he could either speak the sentiments of his Government, or engage it in any way whatsoever in reference to the subjects on which we had expressed a desire to treat.

Not having received from the Prime Minister Yu any reply to the letters which we had addressed to him from Canton and Shanghae, it was only from the powers or instructions of Tau that we could learn whether or not the Chinese Government had any intention of negotiating on the subjects in question.

Moreover, we were warned to be careful on this point, both by the term "assez restreints," which Count Poutiatine, in a circular letter which we had received from him, and to which I shall afterwards more particularly allude, had used in speaking of Tau's powers, and also by what the correspondence inclosed in my despatch to your Lordship No. 102 of this day's date* had taught us concerning the powers of the Commissioners sent by the Emperor to treat with Sir John Bowring and Mr. Mc Lane, in 1854. "Get rid of the barbarians as soon as possible," was manifestly the sum and substance of the powers granted to the Diplomatic Agents of the Chinese Government on that occasion.

With the view, accordingly, of clearing up this point, I addressed to the Imperial Commissioner the note of which the copy forms Inclosure No. 2 of this despatch. Inclosure No. 3 is the translation of his reply. Of course, on such matters I cannot speak as of my own knowledge: but I am assured by the Chinese scholars by whom I am accompanied, and whose acquaintance with the language entitles their opinion to credit, that the Chinese terms employed in my note to signify a power to treat so as to bring matters to a settlement, were studiously avoided in Tau's reply, and others substituted which conveyed no such meaning.

Baron Gros having received to a similar inquiry a similarly evasive answer, we came to the conclusion, after much and serious deliberation, that the time had arrived when it would become us to assume a more decided attitude, in order to persuade the Chinese Government that we are in earnest; that we have demands to make which we are prepared, if necessary, to enforce; and that we are not to be trifled with, as was the case with the barbarian Envoys in 1854.

It was obvious that every day of procrastination and delay was reducing to a lower ebb our chance of bringing to an early and satisfactory consummation the policy which we had been commanded by our respective Governments to carry out in China. Junks laden with supplies for Pekin had been passing the bar of the Peiho river at the average rate of about fifty a-day, ever since I arrived at this anchorage on the 14th of April. The healthy season was passing away; and the Chinese, in dealing with whom promptitude is everything, were beginning evidently to recover from the alarm which our presence had at first occasioned.

We accordingly requested Admirals Seymour and Rigault to meet us on board the "Furious" at 1 o'clock on the 1st day of May, in order that we might deliberate together on the course to be taken.

At this conference the Admirals refused to entertain, at all, the proposal of a move up the river to Tien-tsin.

With regard to the capture of the forts at its mouth, they said that they could give no opinion, as they had not yet made any reconnaissance. I was surprised to hear this after the correspondence which had passed between Admiral Seymour and myself some days before, the copy of which was inclosed in my despatch to the Earl of Clarendon No. 99 of the 28th ultimo; and still more so because the despatch gun-boats, which had been, with great labour, pushed over the bar at the highest tide, being within the range of the fire of the forts, and in a position from which they could not, until the next spring-tide, retire, were clearly exposed to no small danger, except on the hypothesis that we could take the forts at any moment we might see fit to do so.

Be this, however, as it may, the decision of the Admirals, on such a question, was, of course, final; and I agreed to send a note to Tau, which would pledge me to nothing, and facilitate the reconnaissance which the Admirals were desirous to make. Copies of my note to Tau, of a letter to Admiral Seymour in reference to it, and of his reply, form Inclosures Nos. 4, 5, and 6, of this despatch.

Your Lordship will observe that Sir M. Seymour, in his letter last referred to, intimates that, in consequence of the reconnaissance which he had made, I might consider myself at liberty to send in, whenever I chose, the proposed final communication to the Imperial Commissioner, of which I had read the draft to him on the 1st of May, and which was, in substance, an announcement that diplomatic action was, for the time, at an end, and that the affair had been handed over to the Commanders-in-chief.

* See "Correspondence relative to the Earl of Elgin's Special Missions to China and Japan, 1857–59," presented to the House of Commons in answer to their Address of July 15, 1859, No. 151.

Before, however, availing myself of this permission, I thought it right to endeavour to ascertain something respecting the period at which the Commanders-in-chief would be ready to commence operations, a point on which Sir M. Seymour's letter was entirely silent; lest, by prematurely announcing to the Chinese the rupture of diplomatic relations, I should lay myself open to the charge of having invited them to strengthen their defences, and, perhaps, even to fire on the gun-boats within their reach. I accordingly waited on Admiral Seymour, on board of the "Calcutta," and requested him to give me some information on this point. He told me, at first, that it would be soon enough for the Admirals to make up their minds upon it after the diplomatists had retired from the field. On my representing to him, however, that, in my opinion, the interests of the public service would suffer from this mode of proceeding, he gave me to understand that nothing would be done against the forts until after the arrival of the gun-boats, of which we then knew nothing, except that they were supposed to have left Hong Kong about the 15th of April. A similar intimation, in terms yet more precise, having been given by Admiral Rigault to Baron Gros, I deemed it my duty to state to his Excellency that, deeply as I regretted a delay which might, I could not but fear, confirm the Chinese in their obstinacy, and thus imperil the objects of our mission, I still thought that it was incumbent upon us to keep negotiations open until the Admirals should tell us that they were ready for action. His Excellency agreed with me in this opinion; and, in order that there might be no room for mistake on a point so important, I addressed to Admiral Seymour the letter of which Inclosure No. 7 is the copy.

Such, my Lord, is the narrative, as clear and concise as I can furnish it, of the events of the last few days in this quarter, in so far as the course which they have taken has been affected by the determinations of the allied Plenipotentiaries and Commanders-in-chief, acting independently, and with a view to their own interests and duties exclusively.

In a separate despatch, I shall have the honour of calling your Lordship's attention to the bearing which the diplomacy of the Representatives of the neutral Powers, now associated with us, has exercised upon these occurrences.

I have, &c.

(Signed) ELGIN AND KINCARDINE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 3.

Commissioner Tau to the Earl of Elgin.

(Translation.) *April* 30, 1858.

I RECEIVED your Excellency's letter whilst on my tour of military inspection, and having, as in duty bound, submitted for you to the Throne, your letter addressed to Yu, Chief Secretary of State, have had the honour to receive a Decree from His Majesty the Emperor, commanding me to proceed as Imperial Commissioner, to the port of Takoo, hard by, and there, in concert with Tsung, Director-General of Granaries, &c., and Wu, Under-Secretary of the Cabinet, already appointed Commissioners, to meet your Excellency, and enter upon negotiations.

I have decided, upon due consideration,* that for the discussion and disposal of the questions contained in the letters of the different Governments, it will be best to receive (their Representatives) on separate days. It is my duty, therefore, to write to your Excellency to choose the day on which you will meet me at the port, and I hope that you will give me notice, that I may be in readiness to receive you.

Postscript.—It is my duty to add, that my copyist's unacquaintance with the forms of correspondence with your Excellency's nation was the occasion of certain errors in my letter sent before. They have been corrected in this.

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* This may imply one's own resolve individually formed, or formed on consultation with others.

Inclosure 2 in No. 3.

The Earl of Elgin to Commissioner Tqu.

April 30, 1858.

THE Undersigned has the honour to acknowledge the receipt of a letter from Tau, Imperial Commissioner, &c., informing him that he has received the commands of His Majesty the Emperor of China to meet the Undersigned at Takoo, and to enter upon negotiations with him.

In a letter addressed on the 11th of February last to the Chief Secretary of State, Yu Ching, to which as yet no answer has been received, the Undersigned expressly declared himself authorized by his Sovereign to discuss and determine various questions therein set forth in general terms.

The Imperial Commissioner is now requested to inform the Undersigned, positively, by letter this evening, whether His Majesty the Emperor of China has conferred upon him corresponding powers, and such as render him competent to independent discussion, and to the conclusion of negotiations.

On receipt of an answer in the affirmative, the Undersigned will appoint to-morrow for a conference with the Imperial Commissioner. But should the Imperial Commissioner send no reply, or should a reply sent by him declare that he has not the required authority, the Undersigned will regard his pacific overture "for the appointment of a duly qualified officer,"* as rejected by the Imperial Government.

A copy of the letter addressed by the Undersigned to the Chief Secretary of State on the 11th of February is inclosed, and the officer charged with the transmission of this is instructed to wait two hours for a reply.

(Signed) ELGIN AND KINCARDINE.

Inclosure 3 in No. 3.

Commissioner Tau to the Earl of Elgin.

(Translation.) *April* 30, 1858.

TAU, Imperial Commissioner, &c., makes a communication.

I have to state that the Decree of His Majesty, which I have had the honour to receive,† detaches me specially to Takoo, there, in concert with the Imperial Commissioner Tsung, Director-General of Granaries, and Wu, Under-Secretary of the Inner Cabinet, to receive the Envoys of the different Governments, to report to the Throne, and request (instructions as to the) steps to be taken.

Being now in receipt of a letter from your Excellency, it is my duty at once to appoint the 18th instant (May 1), as the day on which I and my colleagues, Tsung, &c., and Wu, &c., will meet you, and learn from you in person the different matters you have to discuss. I write to inform you accordingly.

Inclosure 4 in No. 3.

The Earl of Elgin to Commissioner Tau.

May 1, 1858.

THE Undersigned begs to acknowledge the Imperial Commissioner's letter of yesterday. As that letter contained no satisfactory answer to the question put by the Undersigned in his letter of the 30th ultimo, he did not meet the Commissioner as he had intended to-day.

The Imperial Commissioner will presently hear more at length from the Undersigned.

(Signed) ELGIN AND KINCARDINE.

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* The words in inverted commas are translated into Chinese by those employed in the Earl of Elgin's letter to Yu Ching of the 24th April, submitted, as his letter states, by the Commissioner Tau to the Emperor.

† Were this not in answer to the letter addressed, I should have translated the passage simply, "I have had the honour to receive a decree." The word rendered "decree" is, *lit.*, the will or pleasure of Majesty; but, technically, the placet or rescript issued by the Emperor when announcing an appointment made, or instructions given on receipt of information submitted to him.

Inclosure 5 in No. 3.

The Earl of Elgin to Rear-Admiral Sir M. Seymour.

Sir, "*Furious*," *May* 1, 1858.

IN consequence of the objections to an immediate attack on the forts at the mouth of the Peiho, stated by your Excellency and by Rear-Admiral Rigault de Genouilly, at the conference held this day on board of the "Furious," I have retained my letter to the Imperial Commissioner, of which I read the draft to you, and which concludes with the intimation that I have placed the matter in the hands of the Commander-in-chief of the Naval Forces of Great Britain.

As it was necessary, however, to make some communication to him in order to facilitate your visit to the shore, I have written to him a letter which will keep negotiations on foot until after your reconnaissance of to-morrow shall have been made, and which also gives him a further opportunity of explaining the real nature and extent of his plenipotentiary powers.

I have, &c.

(Signed) ELGIN AND KINCARDINE.

Inclosure 6 in No. 3.

Rear-Admiral Sir M. Seymour to the Earl of Elgin.

My Lord, "*Calcutta*," *May* 3, 1858.

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your Excellency's despatch of the 1st instant, stating that, in consequence of the objections to an immediate attack on the forts by the French Admiral and myself, your Excellency had taken steps to keep negotiations on foot till after my reconnaissance of the forts.

In reply, I have the honour to acquaint your Excellency that I took an opportunity yesterday, in company with the French Admiral, to inspect the front of the forts and the nature of the landing, and that I now wait your Excellency's wishes, after you shall have sent in the proposed final communication to the Imperial Commissioner, a draft whereof your Excellency read to me on the 1st instant.

I have, &c.

(Signed) M. SEYMOUR.

Inclosure 7 in No. 3.

The Earl of Elgin to Rear-Admiral Sir M. Seymour.

Sir, "*Furious*," *May* 4, 1858.

WITH reference to your Excellency's letter to me of yesterday's date, I beg to state that, as I have ascertained from Baron Gros that the Admirals have resolved not to attack the forts at the mouth of the river until after the arrival of more gun-boats, I have thought it my duty to withhold, for the present, the letter to the Imperial Commissioner Tau, of which I read the draft to your Excellency on Saturday last.

I have, &c.

(Signed) ELGIN AND KINCARDINE.

No. 4.

The Earl of Elgin to the Earl of Malmesbury.—(Received July 27.)

(No. 104.)

My Lord, "*Furious*," *Gulf of Pechelee, May* 9, 1858.

IN my despatch to your Lordship No. 103 of this day's date, I state that I propose in a separate communication to call your attention to the bearing which the diplomacy of the Representatives of the neutral Powers now associated with

us has exercised on recent occurrences in this quarter. I now proceed to fulfil this promise to the best of my ability.

It is needless that I should observe to your Lordship that in the attitude which Baron Gros and I, on the one hand, and Count Poutiatine and Mr. Reed, on the other, are instructed by our respective Governments to hold towards that of China, there is a very material distinction. All are generally agreed as to the ends to be sought; but while the latter are precluded from the employment of force, the former are authorized, in certain eventualities, to have recourse to measures of coercion for their attainment.

As to my own personal position in the affair, there never can possibly have been, and, in point of fact, it is not to my knowledge alleged that there ever has been, any doubt whatsoever on the part of those with whom I am acting; for it was plainly set forth in the following words which closed my note of the 11th of February, to the Chinese Prime Minister, the copy of which note was communicated by me officially to their Excellencies Count Poutiatine and Mr. Reed, at the time when I invited them to join Baron Gros and me in an appeal to the Court of Pekin. "If, on the contrary, no Plenipotentiary so accredited shall present himself at Shanghae before the end of the month of March, or if any Plenipotentiary so presenting himself shall be found to have insufficient powers, or if, having the requisite powers, he shall prove himself unwilling to accede to reasonable terms of accommodation, the Undersigned hereby reserves to himself the right of having recourse, without further announcement, delay, or declaration of hostilities, to such measures in vindication of the claims of his country on China, as, in his judgment, it may appear advisable to adopt."

Notwithstanding, however, the very material distinction to which I have referred, the substantial agreement existing between the four Plenipotentiaries extends, I apprehend, beyond the limits by which it would seem to be circumscribed by the letter of their respective instructions. It is my profound conviction that both Count Poutiatine and Mr. Reed held, quite as absolutely as it is held by Baron Gros and me, the opinion that the Chinese Government will not grant to any foreign Power whatsoever the most reasonable concession, even where such concession will be attended by the most manifest advantage to itself, except under the influence of fear. Their own experiences are abundantly instructive on this head; for only last autumn the demands which Count Poutiatine preferred on behalf of his Government, first at Kiahkta, and again at this place, and those which Mr. Reed preferred on behalf of the United States at Canton, encountered from the Agents of the Chinese Government the most peremptory and contemptuous refusal. But in the correspondence found among Yeh's papers, of which a translation is inclosed in my despatch to your Lordship No. 102 of this day's date,* I find a confirmation of this opinion so singular and significant that I cannot refrain from quoting it in this place.

In a Memorial to the Emperor from Hu Nai-chau, Governor of Kiang-su, dated the 3rd of June, 1854, the following passage occurs in reference to a communication which seems to have been made to him by Sir John Bowring, who was then at Shanghae:—

"A communication came yesterday from the English Chief, proposing a conference on business at the barbarian office, on the 9th of the moon, and your servant has written to agree to this. Not that, capricious and inconsistent as he knows these barbarians to be, he is going to exceed in concession; but it is his duty in every case to weigh well the advantage and disadvantage of this or that order of proceeding, and should there be any measure positively beneficial to China, and, at the same time, practicable, without violation of the law, he would assuredly not presume to abide in the smallest degree by standing prejudices."

In an Imperial Decree received by the Great Council, about the middle of July, and transmitted by them in a letter to Yeh, Imperial Commissioner and Governor-General of the Two Kwang; Iliang, Governor-General of the Two Kiang; and Kirhanga, Governor of Kiang-su; the passage which I have just quoted from the Memorial of Hu Nai-chau, is thus commented upon:—

"From a succession of Memorials received from Hu Nai-chau, regarding the rebels and the English Chief at Shanghae, the awkwardness and weakness of his conduct becomes more and more apparent. He states that the Chief had

* See Note, p. 3.

appointed a day for an interview with him, and that in any measure that might be of positive benefit to China he will assuredly not presume in the least to abide by standing prejudices: that is to say, in fact, that he has been perfectly prepared long since to make concessions. We have already degraded this Governor, and we command Iliang and Kirhanga, in the event of his having been duped into any extravagant (or unlawful) engagement by the barbarians, to repudiate it utterly in plain language, and not to be misled by their absurdity. Let them at the same time desire them to proceed to Kwang-tung, and there abide the decision of Yeh Ming-chin."

It would be difficult, I think, to discover a symbol of quantity sufficiently infinitesimal to represent the amount of chance which a negotiator has of obtaining by argument, or appeals to reason alone, anything from a Government which condemns an officer for presuming to say that he will not stand by prejudices when it is for the manifest advantage of his country that he should waive them.

Such being the nature of the understanding subsisting between the four Plenipotentiaries, I have always entertained the hope that, by good management and tact, conjoint action between them might be carried to a very considerable length, until, in short, it should unhappily become necessary for the Representatives of England and France to pass from the demonstration of force as a means of exercising the required pressure, to overt acts of hostility. I have been anxious, therefore, to defer this necessity to the latest moment.

Accordingly, when we failed in our attempt to enter into negotiations with a Chinese Plenipotentiary at Shanghae, I did not at once fall back on the right to resume hostilities which I had reserved to myself by the terms of my note of the 11th of February to the Chinese Prime Minister. I simply intimated that it was my intention to proceed at once to the North, in order that I might place myself in more immediate communication with the high officers of the Imperial Government at the capital, and having induced, as I had no difficulty in doing, the Representatives of the neutral Powers to join me in this intimation, which did not pledge them to anything inconsistent with their instructions, I took measures with all due promptitude to act upon it.

On my arrival in the Gulf of Pechelee, Count Poutiatine, who had reached this place of rendezvous twenty-four hours before me, did me the honour to call upon me. We entered very frankly upon the discussion of our plans and prospects, and I told him that I proposed, as soon as the gun-boats, of which I was in daily expectation, should arrive, to pass the bar and move quietly up the Peiho, telling the mandarins who might come off to implore us not to proceed—which, in accordance with the invariable Chinese practice, they were sure to do before resorting to more stringent measures to arrest our progress—that, in pursuance of the intimation which I had addressed to the Prime Minister, I was advancing pacifically towards the capital for the purpose of having an interview with a Plenipotentiary duly accredited by the Emperor; that I should do no violence, but that if any attempt were made to stop me, I was strong enough to force my way.

Now, of course, it is just possible that the Chinese local mandarins (for there were at that time no others on the spot), seized with an unwonted ardour, and suddenly gifted with a faculty of which I have never yet seen in any of their proceedings the faintest trace—the faculty, namely, of acting energetically on an emergency, and without the advantage of a long period for previous reflection and meditation—it is just possible, I say, that these mandarins, who, from all that we have seen of them, would appear to be more than usually slow and timorous, might have refused to avail themselves of the excellent excuse for remaining passive with which the statement of my pacific intentions in moving up the river, coupled with the evidence of my ability to do so, would have supplied them, and that they might, in consequence, have opened fire upon us. I admit this possibility, because, in order to argue fairly a case which unhappily has not been brought to the test of experiment, it is necessary to include among the hypotheses to be provided for, even the barest possibilities. But I am satisfied that the risk which we should have run of encountering any such resistance on on the part of the Chinese authorities at the forts would have been hardly appreciable; and I am confirmed in this opinion by the fact that Dr. Medhurst, in 1854, when acting as interpreter to Sir John Bowring, went several miles up the river, no attempt having then been made to stop him, except by remonstrance; as

well as by the further fact that even now our despatch-boats have been allowed to cross the bar and place themselves within range of the forts, although the difficulties and delays incident to the operation, in consequence of their great draught of water, necessarily deprived it in a great measure of the imposing character which would have attached to it, if ten or twelve ships of war, of a class utterly unknown to the natives in this part of the Empire, had moved deliberately across the bar and into the river, bearing messages of goodwill to the population, and overtures of peace to the Government, but with, by way of precaution merely, decks cleared for action, triggers cocked, and gunners at the trigger lines.

I may add, in order to exhaust this branch of the case, that, at the period to which I refer, I laboured under the impression that the capture of the forts would be attended by no difficulty whatsoever, if any circumstance arising out of the proceeding in question had rendered that measure necessary.

Count Poutiatine, however entirely agreed with me that a move up the Peiho, under the conditions which I have above described, would not be resisted by the Chinese, and he told me that in that case he would be happy to follow me. I felt confident that Baron Gros and Mr. Reed, who had not at that time arrived at this anchorage, would take the same view of the case as Count Poutiatine and I had done.

My mode of proceeding would therefore have been this: I should have moved into the river with the English gun-boats, and having passed the forts, I should have waited until the French, Russian, and American Plenipotentiaries joined me with such vessels as they could collect. We should have proceeded then in a body towards Tien-tsin. If the Chinese had attempted to obstruct our progress, they must have compromised themselves with the United States and Russia, as well as with England and France: for the four Powers would have been, as regarded the matter in hand, physically and morally inseparable—physically, in their conjoint movement up the river; and morally, in respect of any cause of offence which might have been thereby given to the Chinese Government. The probability is, however, that no such attempt would have been made, and that before the end of last month a powerful fleet, carrying the flags of the four great maritime nations, would have been collected in the vicinity of Tien-tsin, in a position to arrest, if it were deemed advisable to do so, the passage of the junks carrying grain to the capital, and to enable the Plenipotentiaries to command the respectful attention of the advisers of the Emperor of China for the demands which they had to prefer on behalf of their respective Governments.

I have considered it necessary to make this statement, in order that your Lordship may be able to appreciate correctly the situation in which I have since that time found myself, and to pass, with full knowledge of the facts, judgment on the course which I have followed. I have only to add, in conclusion, that the above-mentioned combination failed, because Admiral Seymour neglected to furnish the force, "especially of gun-boats drawing little water," for which I had applied before I left Hong Kong for Shanghae, and which I understood him to have promised.

In consequence of the failure of this plan of operations, I determined, with the concurrence of my diplomatic colleagues, to offer to meet at Takoo, the mouth of the River Peiho, a duly accredited Representative of the Chinese Emperor. A copy of the letter in which I conveyed this offer to the Chinese Minister was inclosed in my despatch to the Earl of Clarendon No. 92 of the 25th ultimo.*

A proposal of this nature, however, addressed to the Chinese Government from the Gulf of Pechelee, was obviously calculated to produce, on the Court of Pekin, a much feebler impression than that which would have been produced upon it by a similar demand addressed to it from under the walls of Tien-tsin.

Moreover, the position of the Plenipotentiaries of the United States and Russia relatively to Baron Gros and myself, was materially affected by this change of plan. A move to Tien-tsin, as a demonstration, would not have been opposed to the letter of their instructions, while it would have been in entire accordance with their own spirit, and they would have heartily joined in

* See "Correspondence relating to the Earl of Elgin's Special Missions to China and Japan, 1857–59," presented to the House of Commons in answer to their Address of July, 15, 1859, No. 146.

it. A move on Tien-tsin, resorted to as a hostile measure, in consequence of a failure in the attempt to negotiate at Takoo, was a proceeding in which they could not take part. It became, therefore, their interest to endeavour to prevent a rupture of diplomatic relations at Takoo between England and France on the one hand and China on the other; and, as a natural consequence of this state of affairs, they began, almost insensibly, to assume, from the period to which I am referring, something of the character of mediators between the parties.

This altered attitude, which was, to a certain extent, a necessity of their situation, is manifested in the correspondence of which I inclose copies, and which comprises the following documents:—Correspondence between Count Poutiatine, Mr. Reed, and me, from April 29th to May 8th; note from me to the Imperial Commissioner Tau, allowing him six days to procure from Pekin powers exactly similar to those granted by the late Emperor Tau Kwang to Kiying and Ilipoo, when they negotiated a Treaty with Sir H. Pottinger in 1842.

I have, &c.
(Signed) ELGIN AND KINCARDINE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 4.

Count Poutiatine to the Earl of Elgin.

A bord du vapeur "America," dans la Golfe du Péchili,
My Lord, *le 29 Avril*, 1858.

J'AI eu l'honneur de prévenir votre Excellence, par ma lettre du 24 Avril, que je me ferai un devoir de communiquer à elle les résultats de mes entrevues avec les fonctionnaires Chinois arrivés de Pékin.

Ayant reçu hier une invitation de la part du Gouverneur-Général du Tchi-li de venir à terre pour une entrevue avec lui, je n'ai pas hésité de m'y rendre. Dans cette entrevue j'ai cru devoir lui faire observer les suites fâcheuses que pourrait avoir le renvoi par les trois Plénipotentiaires des notes qu'il leur avait adressées; ces notes n'étant pas écrites dans les formes de respect dû au rang élevé des Représentants des grandes Puissances intéressées dans les affaires de la Chine. A la suite de ces représentations le Gouverneur-Général a consenti de donner aux lettres refusées la forme voulue, et m'a promis de les envoyer, ainsi corrigées, demain matin à tous les quatre Plénipotentiaires. J'ai tâché ensuite de lui faire comprendre ce qui pourrait amener le commencement d'hostilités. Je lui ai aussi parlé des affaires qui concernent la Russie spécialement, et j'ai insisté sur le droit d'être reçu à Pékin d'après nos Traités et sur l'urgence d'une solution définitive, et sur les lieux mêmes, des questions de frontières entre la Russie et la Chine. Il a promis d'en référer à Pékin, et de faire là dessus son rapport à l'Empereur, ce qui prouve que ses pleins-pouvoirs sont assez restreints.

Il est heureux que les Chinois n'aient pas fait de résistance à l'entrée des bâtiments de guerre dans la rivière; de cette manière l'effusion du sang a été évité, au moins pour le moment, et peut-être entièrement, ce qui serait tout-à-fait conforme aux sentiments pleins d'humanité de votre Excellence.

Veuillez, &c.
(Signé) CTE. POUTIATINE.

(Translation.)

My Lord, "*America*," *Gulf of Pechelee, April* 29, 1858.

I HAD the honour to inform your Excellency, in my letter of the 24th of April, that I should make it my duty to communicate to you the results of my interview with the Chinese functionaries who have arrived from Pekin.

Having yesterday received an invitation from the Governor-General of Tchi-li to go on shore for an interview with him, I did not hesitate to proceed thither. In this interview I thought it my duty to point out to him the sad results which the return, by the three Plenipotentiaries, of the notes which he had addressed to them might entail; these notes not being couched in the respectful form due to the high rank of the Representatives of the Great Powers interested in the affairs of China.

In consequence of these representations the Governor-General consented to give the desired form to the letters which had been refused, and has promised me to send them thus revised to the four Plenipotentiaries to-morrow morning. I then attempted to make him understand what might be the consequences of the commencement of hostilities. I also spoke to him upon subjects which specially concern Russia, and I insisted upon my right to be received at Pekin according to our Treaties, as well as upon the urgent necessity of a definitive settlement, and upon the very spot itself, of the questions relating to the frontier between Russia and China. He has promised to refer to Pekin upon the subject, and to make a report to the Emperor thereupon, which proves that his full powers are very limited.

It is fortunate that the Chinese made no resistance to the entrance of the ships of war into the river; bloodshed has thus been, at least temporarily, and perhaps entirely, avoided: a result which would be in entire conformity with your Excellency's humane sentiments.

Accept, &c.
(Signed) CTE. POUTIATINE.

Inclosure 2 in No. 4.

Mr. Reed to the Earl of Elgin.

Legation of the United States, on board the "Antelope,"
Peiho River, May 1, 1858.

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to inform your Excellency that, besides the request contained in the letter of yesterday, received from the Imperial Commissioner, that I should designate a time for an interview, two Chinese officers have to-day been on board this ship, and urgently repeated the request. I beg to inclose to your Excellency a copy of the answer which I have sent to the letter and to the request.

I have, &c.
(Signed) WILLIAM B. REED.

Inclosure 3 in No. 4.

Mr. Reed to Commissioner Tau.

Legation of the United States, on board the "Antelope,"
Peiho River, May 1, 1858.

THE Undersigned (with titles) received yesterday your Excellency's letter of the 29th, informing him of your appointment as Imperial Commissioner, in conjunction with Tsung and Wu, and that you had arrived at Takoo, and were desirous to have a time appointed for an interview; and the Undersigned having arrived within the bar of the Peiho, has received this morning a friendly inquiry by your messengers, desiring that he should fix a time for an interview. This the Undersigned is at this time unable to do, being anxious to confer with their Excellencies the Ministers of Great Britain and France, before he designates further any time or place. As he has already informed the Imperial authorities, there is, in the course of policy now pursued, entire concord of feeling between the Ministers of the Four Powers, and the Undersigned thinks that any separate action on his part, when there is an opportunity of consultation, might be regarded as an unfriendly act. He is in hourly expectation of the arrival of Lord Elgin and Baron Gros, and will be ready on Monday at the latest (to-morrow being a day of rest) to give a positive answer as to a time of meeting.

The Undersigned takes this occasion of expressing the earnest hope that, if the place of reception be on shore, as he presumes it will be, there shall be such accommodations provided as are becoming the hospitality of the Imperial Commissioner, and the dignity of an interview between Representatives of high and equal rank of great nations.

(Signed) WILLIAM B. REED.

Inclosure 4 in No. 4.

The Earl of Elgin to Count Poutiatine.

M. le Comte, "*Furious*," *May* 2, 1858.

I HAVE the honour to inclose, for your Excellency's information, the copy of a correspondence which has passed between the Imperial Commissioner Tau and me. Judging from what has happened before in similar cases, and more particularly on the occasion of the visit of Sir J. Bowring and Mr. McLane to this place in 1854, I fear that the nomination of a Minister with powers so limited as those held by Tau, does not argue, on the part of the Government of the Emperor of China, any intention to discuss, severally and with a view to their final and satisfactory settlement, the questions brought under its consideration by the Representatives of the Great Powers.

Your Excellency will observe that it is my intention to address a further communication to the Imperial Commissioner. As soon as it is prepared, I shall have the honour to send a copy of it to you.

I have, &c.

(Signed) ELGIN AND KINCARDINE.

Inclosure 5 in No. 4.

The Earl of Elgin to Mr. Reed.

Sir, "*Furious*," *May* 2, 1858.

I HAVE had the honour to receive, by the hand of Count Poutiatine, a copy of your Excellency's letter to me of yesterday's date. The original has not yet reached me.

I beg now to inclose, for your Excellency's information, the copy of a correspondence which has passed between the Imperial Commissioner Tau and me. Judging from what has happened before in similar cases, and more particularly on the occasion of the visit of Sir J. Bowring and Mr. McLane to this place in 1854, I fear that the nomination of a Minister with powers so limited as those held by Tau, does not argue, on the part of the Government of the Emperor of China, any intention to discuss, severally and with a view to their final and satisfactory settlement, the questions brought under its consideration by the Representatives of the Great Powers.

Your Excellency will observe that it is my intention to address a further communication to the Imperial Commissioner. As soon as it is prepared, I shall have the honour to send a copy of it to you.

I have, &c.

(Signed) ELGIN AND KINCARDINE.

Inclosure 6 in No. 4.

Count Poutiatine to the Earl of Elgin.

My Lord, "*America*," *in the Peiho, May* 3, 1858.

I HAVE had the honour to receive your Lordship's letter of the 2nd instant, and I offer you my thanks for it. If I dare to give my opinion, I would now add that we could not expect fuller powers to be granted to a Chinese Plenipotentiary in the pressing difficulties to which China is now exposed, nor do I think that great inconveniences may ensue from references to Pekin, which will not require more than four or five days for answers, though it would have been of immense consequence if negotiations were conducted at Shanghae or at Canton. In my belief I consider that the Chinese Government has acceded to our last demands in sending a proper person for negotiations to the appointed place, and for the term fixed by us for his arrival.

I must apologise for making known my views on this subject, though they

differ with those of your Lordship, but I thought it would be better to do so than not to disclose them.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CTE. POUTIATINE.

Inclosure 7 in No. 4.

The Earl of Elgin to Count Poutiatine.

M. le Comte, "*Furious*," *May* 4, 1858.

I BEG to inform your Excellency that I shall have the honour to reply to-morrow to your letter of the 3rd instant, which I received this morning; and also to apologise for having accidentally omitted to acknowledge, at the time, your letter of the 29th ultimo, in which you were good enough to inform me of what passed at an interview between yourself and the Chinese functionaries from Pekin.

I have, &c.
(Signed) ELGIN AND KINCARDINE.

Inclosure 8 in No. 4.

Mr. Reed to the Earl of Elgin.

Legation of the United States, on board the "Minnesota,"
My Lord, *May* 4, 1858.

I HAD the honour, on the evening of the 2nd instant, to receive your communication dated on that day, with its inclosures. On the afternoon of the 1st, my letter of that date was put on board Her Majesty's ship "Nimrod," to be forwarded to your Excellency, and the copy which Count Poutiatine kindly exhibited, was one which I had furnished him in the ordinary course of our friendly correspondence.

To some extent, your Excellency's letter of the 2nd instant relieved me from the painful state of uncertainty as to your views, and those of Baron Gros, in which I had been since the despatches demanding the appointment of an Imperial Commissioner. In the course then suggested, I gladly acquiesced, as I have done in every other which has been intimated, though I am bound in candour to say that it occurred to me at the time, that the limitation of six days for the arrival of an Imperial Commissioner at Takoo, was rather a strict one. Still, having the greatest confidence in your Excellency's pacific intentions, and your desire to give to the Chinese every chance of friendly negotiation, and no opinion being asked of me, I gave none, and did exactly what you did.

In my note of the 24th April to the Prime Minister at the capital (a copy of which is in your Excellency's hands), I said, "If on or before the last day of this month such a Plenipotentiary shall present himself at or near Takoo, where the Undersigned means to be, there will yet be room for peaceful preliminary negotiation." On the 28th, Tau, the Governor-General, sent me a communication which, on account of an informality in the address, was returned. On the 30th, I received in due form a letter from Tau, announcing his appointment in conjunction with two other Envoys, "to meet and deliberate concerning matters" mentioned in my previous letters. The tone of the communication was perfectly courteous and respectful. I have the honour to inclose a copy of it. I should have done so sooner, had I not at the time had every reason to suppose letters of a similar tenour were simultaneously received by the other Plenipotentiaries.

In my judgment, the course for me to pursue was perfectly clear; and I did what, in my letter of the 24th April, I said I should do. I entered the river on the 30th, and repaired as near Takoo as the position of the English and French ships at anchor permitted me to do. I took for granted (though in this, it seems, I was mistaken), that on the same or the next day I should have had the pleasure of seeing your Excellency and Baron Gros. I beg to assure you, and I am sure you will appreciate the sincere friendliness of the remark, that my disappointment in this respect, when there seemed to be a ray of hope that

peaceful negotiations might begin, was very keen. What occurred immediately after my arrival within the river, your Excellency knows from the letter to Tau, which I had the honour of forwarding on the 1st instant. I beg to repeat a single passage from this note, as expressing as strongly and as earnestly as I could, my deference to your views and those of Baron Gros, and my desire for unreserved confidence:—

"This (the fixing of a day), the Undersigned is at this time unable to do, being anxious to confer with their Excellencies the Ministers of Great Britain and France, before he designates further any time or place. As he has already informed the Imperial authorities, there is, in the course of policy now pursued, entire concord of feeling between the Ministers of the four Powers, and the Undersigned thinks that any separate action on his part, when there is an opportunity of consultation, might be regarded as an unfriendly act. He is in hourly expectation of the arrival of Lord Elgin and Baron Gros, and will be ready on Monday, at the latest (to-morrow being a day of rest), to give a positive answer as to a time of meeting."

On that evening, I received your Excellency's note informing me that you considered the communications of the Imperial Commissioner unsatisfactory, and that you had determined not to meet him for any purpose, unless he should categorically, and in writing, state that he held what, in the language of other nations, are known as full powers.

This information, whilst, as I have said, it relieved me from all uncertainty as to your Excellency's intentions, left me at liberty to pursue the course my own judgment dictated. I regret that my having said to the Chinese, who expressed so earnest and friendly a desire that I should meet their high officers, that I should give an answer on Monday at latest, as well as my own convictions of duty, prevented me from waiting longer for the further communication which your Excellency informed me you meant to send to the Chinese authorities. As to what, under the circumstances I ought, and my Government would expect me to do, I have no doubt whatever. Peace is too important to the relations subsisting between China and the United States to be imperilled by my adherence, in a preliminary correspondence, to the strict rules of Western diplomacy, and I was content to run the risk of ultimate, or even preliminary, failure, on a point which, according to circumstances, might become either substantial or merely technical.

Accordingly, I landed yesterday near the Takoo forts, and had a long and interesting interview with their Excellencies the Imperial Commissioners, the result of which is a clear conviction on my part, that it is at present inexpedient to insist on the production of full powers in writing, but that the High Commissioner is clothed with ample authority to negotiate, and that the only reference to the capital that he needs, or will make, is not of each proposition separately, but of the whole Treaty, or other form of negotiation, after it is completed.

This is so nearly assimilated to a reference for ratification, that I am willing to agree to it, and have announced to the High Commissioner my intention to begin negotiations with him, or at least to submit the points of negotiation for his consideration and our consultation, so soon as he exhibits to me the originals, or copies, of my correspondence of February last, which he asserts are in the proper department at the capital, and also gives me a direct assurance that the letter of the President to the Emperor shall be received and acknowledged on terms of equality. This his Excellency promises me, and five days from yesterday have been agreed to for this purpose. It is my hope then to meet the Commissioners again.

Obvious considerations of propriety operated to prevent me from encouraging any references to the matters of difference between China and Great Britain and France. They were frequently introduced, but always and positively discouraged by me. Towards the close of the conference, I felt it to be my duty to try so far to improve the friendly feeling expressed to the United States, as of my own accord to say a simple word on this delicate subject. I ventured to give an earnest warning against anything like a contumacious refusal to accede to what I understood to be the demands of Great Britain and France, and a hope that they would share with me the confidence I had in your Excellency's moderation and kind feeling towards the Chinese. The reply of the Commissioner was very earnest and precise, and, as far as one can judge the words or acts of this

peculiar people, cordial; that he believed that your Excellency entertained the opinions I attributed to you, and, to use his very words, that "he knew you were not at Canton when the troubles began, and had nothing to do with them." Beyond this, I did not feel at liberty to go, or to permit the subject of your relations to be talked of.

I have thus unreservedly laid before your Excellency all that has transpired since I last had the honour of addressing you, and in conclusion venture to express the earnest hope that all chances of peaceful adjustment are not at an end. I am quite aware how little confidence is to be placed in the assurances and professions of Chinese officials; but so anxious am I for peace, and a bloodless settlement of difficulties, so fearful of a renewal of such a state of things as, without any agency on the part of your Excellency, has occurred in the south of China, that I feel I should not discharge my duty by seeing hostilities begin in the north, without an effort to avert them.

I have, &c.
(Signed) WILLIAM B. REED.

Inclosure 9 in No. 4.

Commissioner Tau to Mr. Reed.

(Translation.)

TAU, Imperial Commissioner of the Ta-Tsing Empire, President of the Board of War, Junior Censor of the Censorate, Governor-General of the province of Chi-li and its dependencies, General of Tsz-king, Mih-yun, and other passes (leading beyond the wall), and Superintendent of the Provincial Revenue and Affairs of the Transit, hereby communicates on business.

Whereas I was on a circuit of inspection of the provincial troops when I received your Excellency's communication, I immediately took the despatch and forwarded it to the Prime Minister Yu, who, having presented the matter in it to the Throne in a Memorial, has now received His Majesty's commands specially designating me to proceed forthwith to Takoo, and in conjunction with the previously-appointed Imperial Envoys, Tsung, Superintendent of the Granaries, and Wu, Under-Secretary of the Privy Council, to see their Excellencies the Honourable Foreign Ministers, and there seriously deliberate with them concerning the matters mentioned in the letters of the several nations. The proper days for having interviews with each (Foreign Minister) can be decided on after consultation, in order to discuss with them their several points.

As is meet, I now send this communication to your Excellency that you may designate on what day you will come into the mouth of the river, where I can have an interview; and it is desirable that the day may be previously notified by a communication, that I may be able to receive you properly.

A necessary communication addressed to his Excellency William B. Reed, &c.

(April 29, 1858.)

Note.—The clerk who wrote out the former despatch had never had practice before in writing out papers, and had no formula before him; but the present despatch is written out in a more correct manner.

Inclosure 10 in No. 4.

The Earl of Elgin to Count Poutiatine and Mr. Reed.

[N.B.—The words in parentheses are omitted in Count Poutiatine's letter.]

M. le Comte (Sir), "*Furious*," *Gulf of Pechelee, May* 5, 1858.

I HAVE had the honour to receive your Excellency's letters of the 29th ultimo and 3rd instant (4th instant), and I beg to thank you for the (very full) statement which it contains of the views entertained and the proceedings adopted by you at this conjuncture.

I must beg to remind your Excellency that in my letter to Yu, of the 11th of February, of which a copy was transmitted to your Excellency in my

despatch to you of the 4th of that month, from the terms of which, except in respect of the concession of further delay, I have not departed in any of my subsequent communications to the Court of Pekin, I used the following language:—

"If, on the contrary, no Plenipotentiary so accredited shall present himself at Shanghae before the end of the month of March, or if any Plenipotentiary so presenting himself shall be found to have insufficient powers, or if, having the requisite powers, he shall prove himself unwilling to accede to reasonable terms of accommodation, the Undersigned hereby reserves to himself the right of having recourse, without further announcement, delay, or declaration of hostilities, to such measures, in vindication of the claims of his country on China, as, in his judgment, it may appear advisable to adopt."

I can assure your Excellency that I am as desirous now as I have ever been to arrive at a settlement of the differences existing between Great Britain and China without further bloodshed, and that I would be most willing to give up any point of form in order to obtain this consummation; but I fear that, in departing on a fundamental principle from a condition laid down in terms so precise, I should only lead the Chinese Government into error as to the determination of Great Britain to assert her claims upon that Government, and thus become the means of ultimately bringing down upon it great calamities.

Your Excellency will permit me to observe that not having received from Yu any reply to the letters which I have addressed to him, I have no evidence beyond that which Tau's powers furnish of the view taken by the Imperial Government of the demands which I have preferred on behalf of Great Britain; and when I ask Tau to inform me of the extent of those powers, he answers, in effect, that he is only authorized to engage in discussions with me, and report on the same to his own Government for instructions—a proceeding which manifestly does not bind the latter to anything.

The Court of Pekin declines to permit the Representatives of foreign States to communicate directly with the Ministers of the Emperor at the capital. The Minister Yu has lately reasserted this principle in the most offensive form, by declining to answer the letters addressed to him by the Representatives of the Great Powers, from Canton and Shanghae. But, at the same time, it puts forward this pretension: it informs us that the customs of the Empire preclude it from delegating to any diplomatic functionary authority similar to that which is known in Western Diplomacy by the term "full powers."

I ask your Excellency, in all earnestness, is it possible that international relations can subsist under such a system?

Nevertheless, with the view of reconciling, in so far as it is possible to do so, the course which I feel it my duty to follow, with that of your Excellency, and also of giving to the Court of Pekin another proof of the conciliatory disposition with which I am animated, I have resolved, with Baron Gros' concurrence, to enter into negotiations with Tau, if he can procure from the Emperor of China powers identical with those which the late Emperor gave to Kiying when he negotiated with Sir H. Pottinger in 1842. I inclose the copy of the note in which I have informed Tau that I will grant him a delay of six days to enable him to procure the power in question.

I have, &c.

(Signed) ELGIN AND KINCARDINE.

Inclosure 11 in No. 4.

Count Poutiatine to the Earl of Elgin.

My Lord, *"America," in the Peiho, May 6,* 1858.

I AM much indebted to your Lordship for the last communication you did me the favour to address. In allowing time to reconsider at Pekin the present intimation, your Lordship has shown great unwillingness to employ violent measures, and no one can deny the propriety to insist on producing credentials of the same form by Commissioner Tau, as have once been given by the Court of Pekin to a Chinese Plenipotentiary. I am aware that without firmness and threats there is no possibility to arrive at a satisfactory result in dealing with the Chinese Government, but perhaps those means will succeed as well or even better than hostile operations.

I am sending to the same effect a short note to Commissioner Tau, thinking that in doing so I am acting agreeably to your Lordship's intentions.

I have, &c.

(Signed) C. POUTIATINE.

Inclosure 12 in No. 4.

Count Poutiatine to Commissioner Tau and his Colleagues.

Dans la Rivière Peiho, à bord du vapeur "l'America,"

(Traduction du Russe.) *le* $\frac{24 \text{ Avril}}{6 \text{ Mai}}$, 1858.

LE Plénipotentiaire de Russie a reçu des Plénipotentiaires de l'Angleterre et de France une communication, dans laquelle il est dit qu'un délai de six jours est accordé au Commissaire Tau pour demander à la Cour de Pékin des pleins pouvoirs, semblables à ceux que l'Empereur Tao Kwang avait donnés aux Commissaires Impériaux Kiying et Ilipoo en 1842 et 1844, en les envoyant dans le Sud pour négocier avec les Plénipotentiaires d'Angleterre et de France.

Le Soussigné prie le Commissaire Tau de s'adresser immédiatement à son Gouvernement, et solliciter l'envoi à Takoo, et dans le délai fixé, de pleins pouvoirs écrits exactement dans les termes que lui ont désignés les Représentants des Puissances alliées. Le Plénipotentiaire de Russie croit devoir engager le Commissaire Tau à prendre cette demande en sérieuse considération et le prevénir qu'en satisfaisant à elle, le Gouvernement Chinois évitera les hostilités qui, dans le cas contraire, pourraient s'en suivre.

Le Soussigné, &c. (Signé) C. POUTIATINE.

(Translation.)

On board the "America," Peiho River, $\frac{\text{April } 24}{\text{May } 6}$, 1858.

THE Plenipotentiary of Russia has received from the Plenipotentiaries of England and France a communication, in which it is stated that a delay of six days is granted to Commissioner Tau to demand from the Court of Pekin full powers, similar to those which the Emperor Taou-kwang gave to the Imperial Commissioners Kiying and Ilipoo in 1842 and 1844, when they were sent to the South to negotiate with the Plenipotentiaries of England and France.

The Undersigned requests Commissioner Tau to communicate immediately with his Government, and to request the dispatch to Takoo, within the prescribed time, of full powers, drawn up in the exact terms laid down by the Representatives of the allied Powers. The Plenipotentiary of Russia thinks it right to advise the Commissioner Tau to take this demand into his consideration, and to inform him that in acceding to it, the Chinese Government will escape the hostilities which, in case of refusal, would probably ensue.

(Signed) C. POUTIATINE.

Inclosure 13 in No. 4.

Mr. Reed to the Earl of Elgin.

Legation of the United States, on board the "Minnesota,"

My Lord, *May* 6, 1858.

I THANK your Excellency for the information contained in your letter of yesterday, and sincerely trust that within the further time allowed to the Imperial Commissioner and his colleagues, such concessions may be made as to secure what I am confident you desire as earnestly as I do—a peaceful adjustment of pending difficulties.

Should I, as is probable, in the interim have further personal intercourse with the Chinese authorities, I shall continue, if agreeable to your Excellency, that unreserve towards you which is most congenial to my own feelings, and, so long as the present state of things continues, completely in accordance with my instructions.

I have, &c.

(Signed) WILLIAM B. REED.

Inclosure 14 in No. 4.

The Earl of Elgin to Mr. Reed.

Sir, "*Furious*," *May* 7, 1858.

I HAVE had the honour to receive your Excellency's letter of yesterday's date, and beg to thank you for your offer to supply me with information respecting anything which you may learn in personal intercourse with the Chinese authorities.

I have, &c.

(Signed). ELGIN AND KINCARDINE.

Inclosure 15 in No. 4.

The Earl of Elgin to Count Poutiatine.

M. le Comte, "*Furious*," *May* 8, 1858.

I BEG to thank your Excellency for your letter of the 6th instant, and for the copy of your letter to Commissioner Tau which is inclosed in it.

I have, &c.

(Signed) ELGIN AND KINCARDINE.

Inclosure 16 in No. 4.

The Earl of Elgin to Commissioner Tau.

May 6, 1858.

THE Undersigned has already apprised the Imperial Commissioner Tau that the letter addressed by him to the Undersigned on the 30th April was entirely unsatisfactory. Holding, as he does, from Her Majesty the Queen of Great Britain, Plenipotentiary powers, he cannot consent to treat with a Representative of the Emperor of China who is only authorized "to enter on negotiations, to report to the Throne, and to request instructions as to the course he is to pursue."

The Undersigned finds, on consulting the records, that when His late Majesty appointed Kiying and Ilipoo his Commissioners for the settlement of pending questions with Her Britannic Majesty's Plenipotentiary, Sir H. Pottinger, the powers conferred on the high officers above-named were fully set forth in a confidential decree, bearing date the 27th day of July, 1842, a copy of which is inclosed.

The Undersigned has now to intimate to the Imperial Commissioner that he has determined on according a delay of six days from the date of this letter in order to enable him to obtain powers similar to those granted to Kiying and Ilipoo.

The Undersigned has only to express his sincere hope that this additional evidence of his desire to avert the evil which persistence in an evasive policy cannot fail, sooner or later, to entail on China, may be duly appreciated by the Imperial Government.

(Signed) ELGIN AND KINCARDINE.

Inclosure 17 in No. 4.

Confidential Letter from the Members of the Great Council to the Imperial Commissioners Kiying and Ilipoo.

(Translation.)

ON the 19th of the 6th moon of the 22nd year of Tau-kwang (July 27, 1842), we had the honour to receive the following Imperial Decree:—

"In consequence of the earnest entreaty of the barbarians for the concession of three points, we had some time ago confidentially instructed Kiying and Ilipoo to confer together upon the course by which (these questions) might be satisfactorily disposed of.

"As, however, to judge from the reply they have written, the barbarians seem in doubt as to the competency of Kiying and Ilipoo to act for themselves, let Kiying and Ilipoo affectionately exhort them (to put their doubts away). If they be sincere in their desire for a cessation of hostilities, and are indeed anxious for (our) assent (to what they propose),* there is no need for extraor-

* Or, anxious for us to enter into engagement,

dinary suspicion or apprehension on their part. The Ministers above named, who have been specially selected, will not fail, on the one hand, to be carefully regardful of the dignity of the State; on the other, to show a condescending consideration for the feelings of the barbarians. In any case, requiring that the course pursued be in accommodation to circumstances. Let them modify their course accordingly.* Nor shall we, at this distance, restrict them. Let them exert themselves.

"Respect this!"

In obedience to the will of His Majesty we write.

No. 5.

The Earl of Elgin to the Earl of Malmesbury.—(*Received July* 27.)

(No. 107.)

My Lord, "*Furious*," *Gulf of Pechelee, May* 11, 1858.

WITH reference to my despatch to Lord Clarendon No. 91 of the 23rd ultimo, I beg leave to observe that I find, among my private letters, a note from Sir M. Seymour, dated the 15th of March, in which he remarks, among other things, that he had put off for about a week his own departure from Hong Kong. To that extent, therefore, I must qualify the statement that I learnt that he was to sail on the 25th, instead of the 16th, from the verbal reports of the officers of the "Coromandel."

He says not a word, however, in that or any other communication which I received from him, of any change in his arrangements for the dispatch of gun-boats to the North; and I continued, after the receipt of the note in question, to base my plans of action on the assumption that, in pursuance of the understanding established between us in our correspondence of the 2nd of March, the copy of which was transmitted in my despatches to the Earl of Clarendon No. 56 of the 2nd, and No. 57 of the 6th, of March,† I might calculate on having at my disposal, in the neighbourhood of Shanghae, about the end of March, a large fleet of gun-boats collected there for the express purpose of enabling me, if I deemed it necessary to do so, to bring pressure to bear at some point near the capital of China.

I have, &c.

(Signed) ELGIN AND KINCARDINE.

No. 6.

The Earl of Elgin to the Earl of Malmesbury.—(*Received July* 27.)

(No. 110.)

My Lord, "*Furious*," *Gulf of Pechelee, May* 15, 1858,

I HAVE the honour to inclose the copy of a correspondence which has passed between Rear-Admiral Sir Michael Seymour and me. After what had occurred at the conference between the allied Plenipotentiaries and Admirals held on board of this ship on the 1st of May, the report of which was forwarded to your Lordship in my despatch No. 103 of the 9th instant,‡ both Baron Gros and I considered that it would be advisable to endeavour to ascertain distinctly the nature and extent of the support which we could count on receiving from our respective Admirals before determining the course which we should take in dealing with Tau's proposals to negotiate.

Admiral Seymour's letters, read by the light which Admiral Rigault's letter

* The sense of this most important passage may be otherwise rendered as follows:—

"Should there be points (*lit.*, places, or a place) requiring that the action taken (be this), what-is-essential-to-the-occasion-do-(that)-thing, then (or in such case) we command that with divergence they take steps (or make arrangements)."

Or, "Should any case call for action (on the principle of) 'quicquid rei oporteat hoc agendum,' let them divergingly (or adaptingly) proceed."

The word translated "divergingly," is one which, in the collocation here employed, implies the opposite of the sense of another Chinese character signifying the direct road. Circumstances not allowing the Commissioners to follow the beaten track, the *politique de principe*, they are to shape a course adapted to these circumstances, to follow a *politique de circonstance*.—T. W.

† See "Correspondence relating to the Earl of Elgin's Special Missions to China and Japan, 1857–59," presented to the House of Commons in answer to their Address of July 15, 1859, Nos. 120 and 121.

‡ No. 3.

to Baron Gros on the same subject casts on those parts of them which are obscure, confirm me in the opinion which I had already derived from his conversation, that it is at present the fixed determination of the Admirals to decline, if they are called upon to undertake hostile operations in this quarter, to advance with their forces up the river towards Tien-tsin; although I am bound to say that I am utterly at a loss to conceive with what purpose or view the gun-boats have been brought here unless it was for this service.

Of the propriety of this decision in a professional point of view it is not for me to judge. I shall only remark on this head that, if an inquiry be instituted, I think it will be found that it is not supported by the opinions of any considerable portion of the officers of any of the four fleets—Russian, American, French, and English—now gathered at this anchorage.

Of its political bearing, however, it is my province to speak, and I feel it my duty to state to your Lordship in the most distinct and emphatic terms that, in my belief, this decision, coupled with Admiral Seymour's omission to send up the gun-boats at the time originally agreed on between us, has deprived the allied Powers of an opportunity for placing the relations between the Western nations and China upon an improved footing, which may, very probably, never again present itself under conditions equally promising.

I do not think it necessary to discuss the merits of the plan of operations submitted by Sir M. Seymour as a substitute for that proposed by the Plenipotentiaries, because in his letter of the 15th instant, he himself states: "With regard to my suggestion that we should attack the forts, and, after abandoning them, should establish a blockade on various points in the Yang-tze-kiang and elsewhere, it appears to your Excellency that this mode of proceeding would be tantamount to a general declaration of war against China, and that in the present condition of our force and of our commerce at the different ports, such a measure would be attended with very great inconvenience and hazard, which I fully concur in."

I must, however, protest against the assumption that there is any analogy between the last-mentioned scheme of operations and the suggestion "to stop the junk trade at the mouth of the Peiho, to take the forts at its mouth, and to proceed up the river to Tien-tsin," conveyed in my letter to Admiral Seymour of the 26th of April, of which a copy was inclosed in my despatch to the Earl of Clarendon No. 99 of the 28th ultimo.* The suggestion in question was submitted as a means of bringing the Imperial Government to immediate terms by the application of local pressure at a point near the capital. It is hardly possible to suppose that any such result could be obtained by the plan of attacking the forts, and, after abandoning them, establishing a blockade on various points in the Yang-tze-kiang and elsewhere. The best information which we possess on the subject leads us to believe that the route of the Yang-tze-kiang and Grand Canal has been for some years past entirely abandoned by the junks which convey grain from the southern provinces to the capital, and I greatly fear that even a blockade of the mouth of the Peiho, at this late season, would be attended with little effect.

I have, &c.

(Signed) ELGIN AND KINCARDINE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 6.

The Earl of Elgin to Rear-Admiral Sir M. Seymour.

Sir, "*Furious*," *May* 11, 1858.

IN order that there may be no mistake as to the purport of what I intended to convey to your Excellency in conversation when I called upon you yesterday on board of the "Calcutta," I think it proper now to repeat more formally, and in writing, that my latest advices from England render it more than ever imperative on me to use my utmost endeavours to bring to a speedy and satisfactory termination the differences now subsisting between Great Britain and China.

It becomes, therefore, the more necessary that I should know distinctly to what extent I may count on your support.

* No. 1.

When I arrived at this anchorage on the 14th of April, the blockade of the River Peiho and the capture of the forts at its mouth might have been resorted to with some good effect, as a means of bringing pressure to bear on the Imperial Court at Pekin, because at that time junks carrying provisions to the capital were daily crossing the bar in considerable numbers. Within the last few days, however, this influx of junks has entirely ceased, and under these altered circumstances of the case it may be doubtful whether the blockade of the river and capture of the forts, if unattended by ulterior measures, will be productive of any result whatsoever.

I must, therefore, request that your Excellency will inform me whether, in the event of my considering it advisable, you are prepared to support my negotiation by directing the gun-boats and other vessels which can cross the bar of the river, to ascend it toward Tien-tsin, as I cannot enter into discussion with Tau with any prospect of a satisfactory result until I am made aware of your Excellency's intention on this point.

I have, &c.
(Signed) ELGIN AND KINCARDINE.

Inclosure 2 in No. 6.

Rear-Admiral Sir M. Seymour to the Earl of Elgin.

My Lord, *"Calcutta," Gulf of Pechelee, May* 11, 1858.

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your Excellency's despatch of this date, and will lose no time in conferring with Rear-Admiral Rigault de Genouilly, to enable me to furnish your Lordship with a reply as soon as possible.

I have, &c.
(Signed) M. SEYMOUR.

Inclosure 3 in No. 6.

Rear-Admiral Sir M. Seymour to the Earl of Elgin:

My Lord, *"Calcutta," Gulf of Pechelee, May* 11, 1858.

IMMEDIATELY on receipt of your Excellency's despatch of this date, I proceeded to confer with Rear-Admiral Rigault de Genouilly, upon the question of your Excellency's wish to bring to a speedy and satisfactory termination the differences now subsisting between Great Britain and China, with a view that we might inform your Excellency to what extent you may count on our support. This wish, I beg to assure your Lordship, is fully shared in by the allied Admirals.

Having, in conjunction with my colleague, duly weighed and considered the subject, I have the honour to report that the forces at our disposal in the North being exclusively naval, and necessarily limited, in consequence of the continued occupation of Canton, and the yet unsettled state of the questions relating thereto, taking also into consideration the security and protection of the British and foreign interests at the Five Ports, we consider that the measures open to us, best calculated to produce ultimate beneficial results, will be to adopt as comprehensive a blockade as our allied force will admit, to embrace the Peiho and other points open to the junk trade, and to extend this measure to the Yang-tze-kiang river, for the purpose, if possible, of interrupting the great inland traffic of the Empire at the entrance of the Grand Canal, at the point of its intersection with that river.

These views coincide with the operations contemplated by the British Government, under date the 26th August and 10th October, 1857, and appear applicable to the present condition of our relations with China. Had the opportunity been afforded I should have been glad to have expressed these opinions before your Lordship quitted Shanghae.

Referring to the second paragraph of your Lordship's letter, in which it is stated that when your Excellency arrived at this anchorage on the 14th April, the blockade of the River Peiho and the capture of the forts might have been

resorted to with some good effect, as a means of bringing pressure to bear on the Imperial Government; I beg to observe that if your Excellency had signified a wish for a blockade, the senior officer then present had the means of adopting that measure, which I should cordially have recognized after my arrival on the 24th.

I have further to observe to your Lordship, that the position of the allied vessels placed at the entrance of the river, to give effect to negotiations, and now under the guns of the Chinese forts, will render it incumbent on the Allied Commanders to act against the forts before proceeding to ulterior measures, and it can only be at the conclusion of these operations that the extent of our advance "towards Tien-tsin" can be determined.

Rear-Admiral Rigault and myself will be glad of an opportunity of conferring with your Excellency and Baron Gros, as to the extent of your Excellency's contemplated advance up the river.

I have, &c.
(Signed) M. SEYMOUR.

Inclosure 4 in No. 6.

The Earl of Elgin to Rear-Admiral Sir M. Seymour.

Sir, *"Furious," in the Gulf of Pechelee, May* 13, 1858.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Excellency that, since I wrote to you on the morning of the 11th instant, I have received a letter from the Imperial Commissioner Tau, respecting the extent of his powers as a negotiator, which I do not consider to be satisfactory.

I have also been informed by Baron Gros that he has addressed an inquiry to Admiral Rigault de Genouilly, respecting a movement towards Tien-tsin, similar to that which I addressed to your Excellency in my letter above referred to.

When Baron Gros shall have received an answer to that inquiry, it will be our duty to consider whether, in the circumstances in which we are placed, we shall best promote the interests confided to us, by maintaining, or by breaking off, diplomatic relations with the Chinese Government.

I have, &c.
(Signed) ELGIN AND KINCARDINE.

Inclosure 5 in No. 6.

The Earl of Elgin to Rear-Admiral Sir M. Seymour.

Sir, *"Furious," Gulf of Pechelee, May* 13, 1858.

SINCE I wrote my letter to your Excellency of this day's date, Baron Gros has had the goodness to hand to me, for perusal, a letter which he has received from Admiral Rigault de Genouilly. If I rightly understand that letter, Admiral Rigault states in it that the Admirals have resolved—firstly, not to ascend the river to Tien-tsin; secondly, not to hold the forts at its mouth, if it shall become necessary to take them.

I shall be obliged if your Excellency will inform me whether I have rightly apprehended the determination to which the allied Admirals have arrived on this point.

I have, &c.
(Signed) ELGIN AND KINCARDINE.

Inclosure 6 in No. 6.

Rear-Admiral Sir M. Seymour to the Earl of Elgin.

My Lord, *"Calcutta," Gulf of Pechelee, May* 14, 1858.

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your Excellency's despatch of yesterday, requesting to be informed, with reference to Rear-Admiral

Rigault's despatch to Baron Gros, whether your Lordship has rightly apprehended the determination to which the allied Admirals have arrived:—first, not to ascend the river to Tien-tsin; secondly, not to hold the forts at its mouth, if it shall become necessary to take them.

I have already informed your Excellency, by my letter of the 11th, that the advance up the river could only be determined on after the capture of the forts at its entrance; and I may now add that I entirely concur in the opinion expressed by Admiral Rigault, that to carry on hostilities up the river and against Tien-tsin, which are not to be followed by its occupancy, seems to me inexpedient, and that we should not threaten without the means of compelling compliance.

I take the liberty of reminding your Lordship that our recent accounts from Canton describe a state of great uneasiness to prevail in that quarter, in consequence of the hostile attitude assumed by the Chinese, which precludes, for the present, our receiving any reinforcements of a character adequate to the occupation of Tien-tsin.

Though Count Poutiatine has afforded me the opportunity of questioning the priest who has arrived from Pekin, viâ Tien-tsin, I have been unable to gather any information regarding the actual state of the river, beyond the circumstance that it is crowded with junks; that in one place he observed three tiers moored across the river about midway between that city and Takbo; and that he counted seventy-two villages, large and small, in the course of his journey between those two points.

With regard to your Lordship's second question, I have also to state that, if it should become necessary to take the forts at the mouth of the river, we consider their destruction would prevent their being re-occupied. Their apparently unhealthy position, surrounded by marsh land, would render our holding them permanently, most prejudicial.

I have, &c.
(Signed) M. SEYMOUR.

Inclosure 7 in No. 6.

The Earl of Elgin to Rear-Admiral Sir M. Seymour.

Sir, "*Furious*," *Gulf of Pechelee, May* 15, 1858.

I HAVE read with great attention your Excellency's letters of the 11th and 14th instant. Your decision on the specific points submitted in my letters to you of the 11th and 13th instant is of course final, and I do not presume to question it. I cannot, however, conceal from your Excellency that I deeply regret it.

As regards the alternative suggested by your Excellency, namely, that we should attack the forts, and, after abandoning them, establish a blockade on various points in the Yang-tze-kiang, and elsewhere, it appears to me that this mode of proceeding would be tantamount to a general declaration of war against China, and that, in the present condition of our force, and of our commerce at the different ports, such a measure would be attended with very great inconvenience and hazard.

I would venture, however, to bring under your consideration another proposal which may, I earnestly hope, seem to your Excellency to be less objectionable than those which I have previously submitted.

If I come to the conclusion that I cannot bring my negotiations with Tau to a satisfactory issue at this place, and that it would be advisable for me to proceed in person to Tien-tsin, will your Excellency be disposed to order me to be accompanied to that place by the gun-boats and other vessels of war of the requisite draught which are in this neighbourhood? As the British Diplomatic Agent I address this request to your Excellency in your character of Commander-in-chief of the British naval forces in these seas, and I shall accordingly await your reply, as it may be a guide to me in my relations with the Imperial Commissioner.

I have, &c.
(Signed) ELGIN AND KINCARDINE.

Inclosure 8 in No. 6.

Rear-Admiral Sir M. Seymour to the Earl of Elgin.

My Lord, "*Calcutta*," *Gulf of Pechelee, May* 15, 1858.

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your Excellency's despatch of this date, stating that your Excellency regrets the decision to which I have arrived on the specific points submitted in your Excellency's letters of the 11th and 13th instant, and that with regard to my suggestion that we should attack the forts, and, after abandoning them, should establish a blockade on various points on the Yang-tze-kiang and elsewhere, it appears to your Excellency that this mode of proceeding would be tantamount to a general declaration of war against China, and that in the present condition of our force, and of our commerce at the different ports, such a measure would be attended with very great inconvenience and hazard, which I fully concur in.

In reply, I have the honour to state that the proposal to attack the forts emanated from your Excellency in your despatch of the 26th April, wherein your Excellency points out that "it may become necessary to stop the junk-trade at the Peiho, to take the forts at its mouth," and to proceed up the river to Tien-tsin. My suggestion relative to blockade was founded both on your Excellency's remark to stop the junk-trade, as well as on the instructions to that effect from Her Majesty's Government.

With reference to your Excellency's alternative to proceed in person to Tien-tsin to negotiate, accompanied by the gun-boats of light draught, I have the honour to state that though I am desirous, in compliance with my instructions, to furnish your Excellency with such force as you may require to carry on your negotiations at whatever point your Lordship may see fit, yet whilst the forts at the entrance of the river remain in possession of the Chinese, I should be reluctant to expose the persons of the Ambassadors, and those who would have to accompany them, a distance, said to be sixty miles from the entrance, without that security for their safety that the possession of the forts would ensure.

I have, &c.

(Signed) M. SEYMOUR.

No. 7.

The Earl of Elgin to the Earl of Malmesbury.—(*Received July* 27.)

(No. 112.)

My Lord, "*Furious*," *Gulf of Pechelee, May* 20, 1858.

I HAVE the honour to inclose the translation of a letter which I received on the 11th instant from the Imperial Commissioner Tau, in reply to that which I addressed to him on the 6th instant, the copy of which is transmitted in my despatch to your Lordship No. 104 of the 9th instant.*

In my letter to Tau, I sent him a copy of a Decree of the late Emperor, conferring on Kiying and Ilipoo powers to treat with Sir H. Pottinger, in 1842. I required that Tau should be invested with similar powers by a similar Decree before I would consent to enter into negotiations with him. I felt, as Count Poutiatine expresses it in his letter to me of the 6th May, of which a copy is inclosed in my despatch already referred to, that no one could deny the propriety of insisting on the production, by the Commissioner Tau, of credentials in the same form as those which had once before been given by the Court of Pekin to a Chinese Plenipotentiary. Tau's answer, though circumlocutory and evasive, conveys in substance the Emperor's refusal to accede to this demand.

On the day following that on which Tau's answer reached me, I received from Count Poutiatine a slip of paper, with Chinese characters upon it, of which Inclosure No. 2 of this despatch is the translation. The document was a very informal one; unsigned, and, on many accounts, on which I do not think it necessary at present to dwell, unsatisfactory to me.

Count Poutiatine's letter to me of the 17th instant, of which the copy is herewith inclosed, shows how soon any hope of arriving at an adjustment of our difficulties with the Chinese Government, which he might have founded on this overture, abandoned him.

* No. 4.

On receipt of the last-mentioned letter from Count Poutiatine, I immediately waited on Baron Gros, on board of His Imperial Majesty's ship "Audacieuse," in order to come with him to a final determination as to the course which, in the circumstances in which we found ourselves, we ought to pursue. His Excellency entirely agreed with me in the opinion that, as the hot season was approaching, and as our Admirals had received almost all the reinforcements which they could expect, it was our bounden duty to take steps to bring to an immediate issue, in one way or another, our attempts at negotiations in this quarter.

It appeared to us that, in order to arrive at this result, we should have to choose one of three modes of proceeding. Either, firstly, to enter into negotiations with Tau, with the intention of accepting such a Treaty as we could induce him to grant. If we adopted this course we should do so with the full conviction on our minds, which the experiments made by Count Poutiatine and Mr. Reed had confirmed, that we should not obtain terms that would be satisfactory to our Governments. Or, secondly, to furnish him with a detailed statement of the conditions on which we were prepared to conclude a Treaty, leaving them in his hands ostensibly for the purpose of enabling him to consult the advisers of the Emperor upon them, and, meanwhile, retiring ourselves pacifically from this place, in order to obtain further instructions from our Governments—a mode of proceeding in favour of which, in the difficult position in which we found ourselves, some plausible arguments might be urged, but which, on the other hand, it was greatly to be feared would be regarded by the Chinese as an admission on our part that, even with some twenty-five ships of war in the Gulf, we did not dare to attack them. Or, thirdly, to make another attempt to bring pressure to bear at some point nearer to the capital. We had found no Chinese negotiator at all when we presented ourselves at Shanghae. At the mouth of the Peiho we had been met by one who had, however, insufficient powers, and who came obviously not to treat with us, but, by force or persuasion, to drive us back. It was not altogether unreasonable to suppose that at Tien-tsin we should find one really empowered to negotiate and to conclude.

A formidable difficulty, however, stood in the way of our adoption of this plan. The Admirals had, on the one hand, intimated to us, that if they were called upon to act, they were resolved to confine hostile operations in this quarter to the capture of the forts at the mouth of the Peiho, their destruction and abandonment. On the other hand, they had given us to understand that they would not allow the gun-boats even to accompany us pacifically up the river, unless the forts were previously in their hands. In this dilemma, we resolved upon a course of proceeding, which is no doubt, open to criticism; but which is, nevertheless, I believe the least objectionable which, under the circumstances, it was open for us to take. Its details are given in the following correspondence, the copy of which is inclosed in this despatch:—

Memorandum by Sir M. Seymour, of what passed at a conference of the allied Plenipotentiaries and Admirals, held on board of the "Audacieuse," on the 18th instant;

Letter from me to Tau;

Letter from me to Sir Michael Seymour, inclosing the copy of my letter to Tau;

Sir Michael Seymour's reply;

Letter from me to Count Poutiatine and Mr. Reed respectively;

Replies to that letter, received by me from their Excellencies.

I have, &c

(Signed) ELGIN AND KINCARDINE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 7.

Commissioners Tau, Tsung, and Wu, to the Earl of Elgin.

(Translation.)

TAU, Governor-General of Chih-li, &c., Tsung (Tsung-lun), Director-General of Granaries, &c., and Wu (Wurkuntai), an Under-Secretary of the Cabinet, Imperial Commissioners, make a communication.

We duly received your Excellency's letter to the effect that Kiying and Ilipoo, the Commissioners for the settlement of differences on a former occasion, having had issued to them by His late Majesty a Decree, commanding them to "act as occasion might require,"* you had determined to wait six days for us to obtain powers corresponding to those of Kiying and Ilipoo; a sufficient evidence of your Excellency's appreciation of the importance of public business.

There being no such title in China as "Tsinen-kinen,"† when the former Commissioners, Kiying and Ilipoo, negotiated the Treaty of Peace, the things done by them "as occasion required,"‡ were from time to time submitted to the Throne. They had no independent (or absolute) authority to act whatsoever.§

In the present case, when the Imperial Commissioner (Tau) had the honour to be specially appointed to this service by His Majesty the Emperor, it was under the following Imperial Decree:—

"Tsung-lun and his colleague being high officers commissioned by us are, properly speaking, competent to the conduct of discussions to an issue. As Tau Ting-hiang is, from the post he fills, an officer of greater respectability, we command him to associate himself with them in their deliberations. Respect this!"

Transcendant was the brightness of the will of the Sacred One, thus ordaining the administration of this matter; and the authority (so conferred) corresponding to that of the former Commissioners, Kiying and Ilipoo, with perfect fairness and impartiality in the treatment of the various questions properly liable to be brought under discussion, both countries would assuredly thence have been advantaged. That a definite settlement of a question (under such powers) is in no way impracticable, is shown (by what occurred), for instance, in the fourth year of Hien-fung (1854). The Commissioner Tsung-lun,‖ when he met the British Minister and the French Secretary of Legation to arrange the remission of duty-arrears and other points, did, then and there, report to the Throne, and received assent (to propositions submitted).

The Commissioner (Tau) has now, on receipt of your Excellency's letter, again memorialized the Throne, and having in reply received an Imperial Decree, commanding him to act as His Majesty has directed him¶ it becomes (our duty) to make answer to that effect for your Excellency's information.

Pray do not doubt or delay. Let us hope that you will at once name a day for a conference.

A necessary communication addressed to the Earl of Elgin, &c.

Hien-fung, 8th year, 3rd moon, 27th day (May 10, 1859).

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* These are the words used in the late Emperor's Decree of July 27, 1842, elsewhere translated, and insisted upon by Ilipoo and Ninkien, when charged by the Emperor to remove all doubt as to the nature of the Commissioners' powers.

† Sir H. Pottinger having declared it impossible for him to treat with any Commissioner of less ample powers than his own, as defined by the term "Plenipotentiary," to represent which the Chinese combination "tsinen kinen," "complete authority," had been coined, Kiying and Ilipoo explained that the Chinese "Chin-chai," "Imperial Commissioner," was, technically, identical with our Minister Plenipotentiary, and that there was no such title in China as "tsinen kinen." We have retained it in our version of the title of our Ministers, but I have carefully abstained from using it otherwise; and, in the letter to which this is a reply, I have employed, as above stated, the words applied by the late Emperor to the powers of Kiying and Ilipoo to translate "Plenipotentiary powers."

‡ Or, as we should say, "their acts as Plenipotentiaries."

§ The real extent of their powers was as follows:—The conditions of a Treaty having been placed before them, off Nankin, by Sir Henry Pottinger's Secretaries, on August 12, 1842, were, in the main, accepted by the Commissioners, in a note of August 14. Certain modifications were proposed by them, in a note of the 15th, which was acknowledged by Sir Henry Pottinger, in a note of the 16th, in which he remarks that they differ with him in form rather than substance. The Commissioners would have signed and sealed at once, had Sir Henry Pottinger not deemed a preliminary interview on business advisable. This took place on the 26th, inside Nankin. On the 27th arrived a rescript from the Emperor, dated August 27, approving all but the concession of trade at Foo-chow-foo, "which must in no wise be allowed." Sir H. Pottinger would not abandon it, and, on August 29, without any further reference to the Throne, the Treaty was signed. We have the Rescript in full.

‖ Tsung-lun's name stands, with those of Tau and Wu, at the head of this paper, but its position here is as though allusion were made to him not as one of the writers; the letter is, in fact, Tau's explanation. Tsung-lun's treatment of the questions put before him by Sir J. Bowring and M. Klecszkowski, in 1854, is shown at length, in his correspondence with the Emperor, copies of which were found in Yeh's yamun, and have been translated.

¶ *Lit.*, act in obedience to us, viz., in the Decree before issued to you.

Inclosure 2 in No. 7.

Chinese Memorandum, forwarded through Count Poutiatine.

(Translation.)

ART. 1. THE question whether the English and French shall or shall not be allowed into Pekin, at their own charges,* to discuss and determine matters of importance, is now under reference to the Throne, and the Decree of His Majesty is expected (or we are waiting for it).

Art. 2. Christians† are good men. They may (or shall) be authorized to preach their doctrine without hindrance; but tickets (passes?) cannot be given them.

Art. 3. What number of additional ports may be opened to trade, to be settled at a conference.

Art. 4. Compensation for the buildings destroyed by fire at Canton to be a subject of consideration at a conference. The expenses of the war not to be made good.

Inclosure 3 in No. 7.

Count Poutiatine to the Earl of Elgin.

My Lord, *"America," in the River Peiho, May* 17, 1858.

THE Governor-General Tau has just sent a mandarin to tell me that the Emperor refuses to admit foreign Envoys to Pekin.

It gives me great pain to communicate this intelligence to your Lordship. The Court of Pekin seems not to understand the perilous position in which it has now placed itself.

I have, &c.
(Signed) C. POUTIATINE.

Inclosure 4 in No. 7.

Memorandum by Rear-Admiral Sir M. Seymour, of a Conference held on board "l'Audacieuse" frigate, May 18, 1858.

Present:

The Earl of Elgin.
Baron Gros.
Rear-Admiral Sir C. Rigault de Genouilly.
Rear-Admiral Sir M. Seymour.

Proposed by the Ambassadors,—

To take the forts, and, in accordance with language held to Tau, the Chinese High Commissioner, to go nearer the capital to treat; to advance pacifically up the river with a view to meeting a Plenipotentiary.

It was remarked that the Ministers of Russia and the United States would unite in this movement after the capture of the forts.

I stated that I was quite prepared to operate against the forts, and afterwards advance the gun-boats in aid of the proposed movements up the river.

The official authority requiring me to act is to be furnished by Lord Elgin.

(Signed) M. SEYMOUR.

"Calcutta," Gulf of Pechelee, May 18, 1858.

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* I understand this to refer to our admission for this once, not to permanent residence, or repetition of visits. So thinks my Chinese Assistant.

† The word translated "Christians" is that so used in general. At the ports where there are Protestant Missionaries as well, it distinguishes the Church of Rome.

Inclosure 5 in No. 7.

The Earl of Elgin to Commissioner Tau.

"*Furious*," *May* 20, 1858.

THE Undersigned had the honour to address a letter on the 6th instant to the Imperial Commissioner Tau.

The Undersigned therein informed the Commissioner that being invested by Her Britannic Majesty with Plenipotentiary powers, he could not consent to treat with a Representative of the Emperor of China who did not hold from His Imperial Majesty corresponding authority as a negotiator.

The Undersigned further inclosed to the Commissioner in that communication, the copy of a Decree taken from the records, and bearing date the 27th July, 1842, in which the powers conferred by His late Majesty upon Kiying and Ilipoo, when he appointed them his Commissioners to treat with Sir H. Pottinger, were fully set forth; and he intimated to the Commissioner that he had determined on according him a delay of six days, to enable him to obtain powers similar to those granted to Kiying and Ilipoo.

The Undersigned at the same time took occasion to express his sincere hope that this additional evidence of his desire to avert the evil which persistence in an evasive policy could not fail, sooner or later, to entail on China, might be duly appreciated by the Imperial Government.

Upon the 11th instant he received from the Commissioners Tau, Tsung, and Wu, a reply to the above-mentioned letter.

Without dwelling on the contrast which the tone of this reply presents to that of the letters addressed in a similar case to Sir H. Pottinger, it is enough for the Undersigned to observe that he can only draw from it the inference that his reasonable demand for evidence of the sufficiency of the powers conferred by the Emperor on the High Officer appointed to treat with him, has been refused by His Imperial Majesty.

The Undersigned forbore for some days from taking the steps warranted by this refusal, in consequence of a friendly communication which he received from the Plenipotentiary of Russia, and which led him still to hope that this deficiency in the Plenipotentiary powers of the Imperial Commissioner might be in some degree remedied by instructions ample enough to enable him to treat upon the several subjects detailed in the letter of the Undersigned to the Chief Secretary of State, Yu Ching, of the 11th of February. In this hope he has been disappointed. A later communication from Count Poutiatine has but strengthened his conviction of the futility of any further attempt to open negotiations at the mouth of the Peiho.

In pursuance, therefore, of an intention already announced in his letter of the 1st of April to the Chief Secretary Yu Ching, which, like its predecessor, has been left without reply, he has resolved to place himself in more immediate communication with the High Officers of the Imperial Government at the capital. For this purpose he is about to move up the river towards Tientsin.

As a preliminary measure it will be requisite that the forts at the mouth of the Peiho be placed in the hands of the Commanders-in-chief of the allied force. Their Excellencies will signify the time within which the Imperial troops will be called on to evacuate these works. The forts once in possession of the allied force, the Undersigned will ascend the river, trusting that the Imperial Government will, without further delay, admit the expediency of appointing a duly qualified Representative to meet him.

(Signed) ELGIN AND KINCARDINE.

Inclosure 6 in No. 7.

The Earl of Elgin to Rear-Admiral Sir M. Seymour.

Sir, "*Furious*," *Gulf of Pechelee, May* 19, 1858.

I HAVE the honour to inclose, for your Excellency's information, a draft of the letter which I propose to address to-morrow to the Imperial Commissioner Tau.

From what transpired at the conference held yesterday on board the "Audacieuse," as well as from what I had previously stated to your Excellency in conversation when I visited you two days ago, your Excellency is aware that Baron Gros and I are of opinion that we cannot continue our endeavours to open negotiations with the Chinese authorities at the mouth of the Peiho, with any prospect of arriving at a satisfactory result; but that we consider it to be our duty, before abandoning the locality altogether, to give a further proof of our earnest desire to bring to a speedy settlement the differences now subsisting between our respective nations and China, and to obtain guarantees against their recurrence, by moving in person up the river in the direction of the capital.

I am also aware, both from what your Excellency stated in your letter to me, dated the 15th instant, and from what fell from yourself and Admiral Rigault at yesterday's conference, that you are of opinion that the movement in advance cannot be properly undertaken while the forts at the mouth of the Peiho river remain in the occupation of the Chinese.

I am therefore prepared, Baron Gros concurring, to take on myself the responsibility of requesting your Excellency to summon the Commander of the forts to deliver them temporarily into your hands, on the assurance that you will return them when the negotiations in which the Plenipotentiaries are engaged shall have been brought to a satisfactory issue, and if the summons in question be disregarded, to take them by force.

I have only to add that, looking to the lateness of the season, and the importance of promptitude in dealing with the Chinese, the sooner these measures, now that they are, in principle, determined on, are carried into effect, the greater, in my opinion, is the probability that they may be attended with success.

I may state, in conclusion, that I have reason to hope that when the question of the forts is disposed of, Count Poutiatine and Mr. Reed will be willing to accompany me up the river.

I have, &c.
(Signed) ELGIN AND KINCARDINE.

Inclosure 7 in No. 7.

Rear-Admiral Sir M. Seymour to the Earl of Elgin.

My Lord, "*Calcutta*," *Gulf of Pechelee, May* 19, 1858.

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your Excellency's despatch of this date, with its inclosure, and in compliance with your Excellency's wishes, to state that, having conferred with Rear-Admiral Rigault, we intend to move our forces to the mouth of the Peiho this afternoon, and to attack the forts to-morrow morning, should the terms of your Excellency's despatch to the Imperial Commissioner Tau not be complied with.

I have, &c.
(Signed) M. SEYMOUR.

Inclosure 8 in No. 7.

The Earl of Elgin to Count Poutiatine and Mr. Reed.

"*Furious*," *Gulf of Pechelee, May* 19, 1858.

IT is with very great regret that I have to inform your Excellency that the result of the endeavours which I have made, in conjunction with Baron Gros, to satisfy myself as to the nature and extent of Tau's powers, and the *bona fides* of the Court of Pekin, in appointing him to treat with me, has brought me to the conclusion that nothing but delay and disappointment are likely to result from an attempt to open negotiations with him at this place.

I need not recapitulate to your Excellency the history of these endeavours, as you are already familiar with it; but I cannot refrain from expressing my acknowledgments to your Excellency for the exertions you have made to bring the Chinese authorities to more reasonable sentiments.

Deeply impressed, however, with the importance of settling the differences now subsisting between Great Britain and China, and obtaining securities against their recurrence at the earliest possible period, I consider it to be my duty, before abandoning the attempt for the present, and applying to my Government for fresh instructions, to make a further appeal to the Court of Pekin from some point nearer to the capital.

This decision, which I have taken in concert with Baron Gros, is perfectly consistent with the course which I have hitherto followed in my endeavours to open negotiations with the Chinese Government, and with the language of my successive communications to the Court of Pekin, copies of all of which are in your Excellency's hands.

It is proper, however, that I should inform your Excellency that the Commander-in-chief of the naval force of Great Britain in these seas, whose authority on such a point is, of course, conclusive with me, declines to permit the vessels under his command to ascend the river towards Tien-tsin whilst the forts at its mouth remain in the occupation of Chinese troops. He will, therefore, as a preliminary measure, in concurrence with the Commander-in-chief of the French naval force, summon the Commander of the Forts to deliver them temporarily into his hands on the condition that they shall be returned to the Chinese Government when the negotiations in which the Plenipotentiaries are engaged shall have been satisfactorily concluded. Should this summons be disregarded, he will take them by force.

I have already had the honour of communicating to your Excellency so fully, in conversation, the general views of policy by which I have been guided in determining on this mode of proceeding, that I do not think it necessary to enter, at length, upon this branch of the subject on the present occasion. It has been a matter of unfeigned gratification to me to believe that the sincerity of my desire to pursue a moderate course in my relations with the Chinese Government has been appreciated by your Excellency. I shall, therefore, close this letter with the assurance that notwithstanding the greatest stringency of the measures which the inaccessibility and impracticability of the Court of Pekin impose on me in this instance, I shall present myself in the river or at Tien-tsin with the same earnest desire and aim at a pacific settlement of existing differences, and the same readiness to accept reasonable terms of accommodation, by which I have been actuated in the successive endeavours to open negotiations with the Chinese Government which I have already made in concert with your Excellency.

I have the honour to inclose, herewith, the copy of a note which I propose to send to Tau at an early hour to-morrow.

I have, &c.
(Signed) ELGIN AND KINCARDINE.

Inclosure 9 in No. 7.

Count Poutiatine to the Earl of Elgin.

My Lord, "*America*," *in the River Peiho, May* 19, 1858.

I CANNOT but be grateful for the detailed communications that you did me the honour to forward to-day, as well as for the acknowledgment of my late exertions in persuading the Chinese to yield to our general demands. Though these efforts proved unsuccessful, I am ready, as I have stated more than once, to follow your Lordship up the River Peiho, whenever you move in that direction, and to use again my endeavours and give every moral support, in conformity with my instructions, to promote a pacific arrangement of the present affairs in China.

I have, &c.
(Signed) C. POUTIATINE.

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Inclosure 10 in No. 7.

Mr. Reed to the Earl of Elgin.

Legation of the United States,
My Lord, *"Minnesota," May* 19, 1858.

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your Excellency's despatch of to-day, with its inclosure, and, with your Excellency, deeply regret the necessity which compels you to adopt the course you have indicated.

I avail myself of this opportunity to renew the assurance of my conviction of the sincerity of your Excellency's desire to pursue throughout a moderate course in your relations with the Chinese Government; and should hostilities yet be averted, as we all hope they may, I shall be most happy to unite with your Excellency in a new and nearer appeal to the Court of Pekin, and to continue that peaceful co-operation which my Government so much desires, and which, I need not add, is most agreeable to me.

I have, &c.
(Signed) WILLIAM B. REED.